

BANDWAGON

The Journal of the Circus Historical Society, Inc.

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Bandwagon

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THE FRONT COVER PARADE WAGONS 1847

By Stuart Thayer

A recent auction of circus material once owned by Thomas Brooks, early animal trainer, included the handsome poster on the cover of this edition of *Bandwagon*. It was bought by Howard Tibbals, of Oneida, Tennessee, who has made it available to the editors.

Brooks, who first appears in advertisements in this country in 1847, must have been with the Van Amburgh & Co. Menagerie in Europe, as several of the handbills and posters in the auction lot were from that time. He was apparently a pupil of Van Amburgh, and was active at least as late as 1853.

The cover poster (a lithograph) is titled "R. Sands & Co.'s Mammoth Establishment making their public entry into New York." This could date its use as early as 1846. The Sands company returned from England in December, 1845, and in April, 1846 paraded jointly with the Van Amburgh Menagerie, which had returned at the same time. The two companies may have been owned, or managed, in combination. Lewis B. Lent was the manager of the Van Amburgh concern, and a partner in

R. Sands & Co. For a time the two troupes had been combined in Europe.

Two of the vehicles on the poster have been identified. Edwin Hughes, the British circus proprietor, introduced a wagon in his street parades in 1843 which he called "The Rath or Burmese Imperial Carriage." It is the one with the two-elephant hitch at the bottom of the lithograph. It was designed by William F. Walleth, the famous clown, and built by the firm of Holmes, of Derby. Walleth referred to it in his autobiography as "the great lion carriage." Hughes used the wagon through 1847, his last year as a showman.

Van Amburgh & Co. was in Europe from 1836, and Sands & Co. from 1842. In their joint 1846 parade in New York they introduced a close copy of Hughes' Rath. Since Hughes was still parading his wagon in 1847, it follows that the American vehicle was not the original. The two differed but slightly. On the Hughes' model the canopy was topped by a finial; the American wagon had an eagle. The canopy supports were convoluted wooden carvings with Hughes; the American had dolphins.

In an illustrated booklet sold on the Van Amburgh show in 1846 it

was said that the chariot was twenty-feet, six inches long, and seventeen feet high. The canopy could be lowered to pass under bridges. The woodcut in the booklet shows the Hughes version, but with a band in it. Hughes did not use his as a bandwagon, having an oriental potentate as its lone passenger. The booklet was printed in New York by Jonas Booth, and written by John Tryon, the American showman. The drawing does indicate, however, that the American showmen brought some Hughes advertising material to this country.

Van Amburgh & Co. called it "The Triumphal Car," and used it in 1846 and 1847. It was not only their bandwagon, but their bandstand as well, as they brought it into the tent for music during the performance. In 1848 the wagon was transferred to Sands, Lent & Co., who advertised it as "The Car of India." On the Sands show the car was pulled by elephants. Present knowledge indicates that the vehicle could have been on Sands' various titles (Sands, Lent &

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Co., Sands & Quick, Sands & Chiarini) as late as 1854.

This brings us to the vehicle at the head of the parade on the poster, "The Egyptian Dragon Chariot." This large, wooden reptile was introduced by Hughes in 1847. It carried his band in that season. A similar wagon was used by Sands, Lent & Co. in 1847, thus, again, establishing that a copy had been made. Sands advertised it as "The Serpent Bandcar," and paraded it in 1847, 1848, and 1849. Pulled by horses in 1847, camels provided the propulsion in the other two seasons. In 1852 the show was titled Sands & Quick, but no specific reference to the dragon has been found. It was advertised by Sands, Nathans & Co. in 1855, when it had a four-elephant hitch, and again in 1858, still on Sands, Nathans. Beyond then, we have found no notice of it.

The possibility exists that two copies of the dragon were imported, as Seth B. Howes had one on his circus in 1848. It could be that Howes purchased the original from Hughes.

As for the poster, none of the other vehicles were on an American show. *The Era*, an English theatrical newspaper, published a description of Hughes' 1847 parade, and it exactly matches the lithograph. The poster was obviously made for Hughes as it says at the bottom that it was lithographed in London, yet printed in New York. Sands obviously brought Hughes' poster from England and had it overprinted with his title. Since both vehicles were with Sands in 1848, we can date the distribution as being in that year.

THE BACK COVER

The Cole Bros. title was first used in 1906 by Martin J. Downs. This courier was printed by Erie that same year. Pfening Archives.

DUES NOTICES

The Circus Historical Society dues and *Bandwagon* subscription notices for 1998 will be mailed late in April.

Payments for the year starting May 1, 1998 must be received by July 1 or the July-August *Bandwagon* will not be mailed. Send your payment at once so you will not miss an issue.

EMERITI TRUSTEES

During a meeting of the Circus Historical Society, Inc. trustees on March 8, 1998 in Atlanta, Georgia the office of emeritus trustee was created.

Three former long time CHS directors and extensive contributors to the *Bandwagon* were the first to be honored by appointment to the new office.

They are Joseph T. Bradbury, Orin C. King and Stuart Thayer.

Circus Historical Society President Richard J. Reynolds III has presented a bronze plaque commemorating their appointment to each of the honorees.

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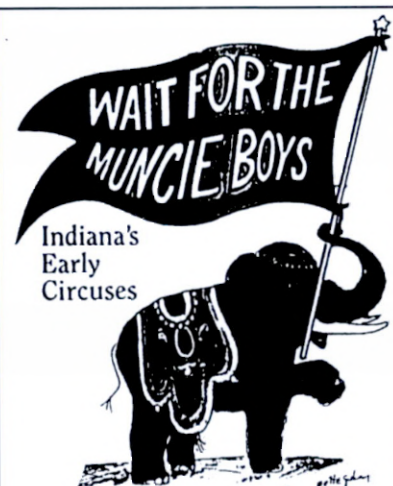
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Frederick H. Graham

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BY FRED D. PFENING III

This was a year which should have been better than it was for circuses as economic conditions pointed toward a bang-up season that didn't happen. Business activity was strong, the stock market at an all-time high, and unemployment low—yet most shows reported only mediocre results. Tent shows, particularly, saw receipts fall from previous seasons. This seemed rather ominous to showmen who pondered what business would be like in a slow economy when it wasn't good when the economy was popping.

Once upon a time all of America, people from all financial and ethnic backgrounds went to the same circuses. No more. In the 1990s the business fragmented, perhaps for the first time since the 1870s when the big railroad shows abandoned the small towns. At the top of the ladder was Cirque du Soleil and its imitators who wooed affluent urban audiences with great success. These were well educated, sophisticated professionals who had stopped attending traditional sawdust troupes years before. To them, going to Soleil or another new waver was akin to going to the theater or symphony, and represented a new segment of the market. Amazingly, this was the healthiest, fastest growing part of the industry. Equally important, these shows were the main engines of

artistic change and innovation that permeated the entire business. Hard to believe, but Montreal loomed large on the circus map.

In the middle were Ringling-Barnum, Shrine circuses, mainline tenters, and school shows. While they still appealed to the great American middle class, they had lost much of their luster, particularly among the young who had so many other amusements, both live and electronic, to choose from. This portion of the industry was stagnant or even declining. Creatively, the more progressive of these shows, such as Ringling-Barnum, incorporated elements of the newer troupes into their performances.

Shows marketed exclusively to African-Americans or Hispanics were another part of the spectrum. The UniverSoul Circus brought blacks in big cities back to the circus, and a number of Latino companies, almost all owned by Mexicans, catered to Spanish-speaking populations. While black and Latino circus ownership was rare in the past, it was not unheard of. What was new was advertising solely to an ethnic audience. Like the new wavers, these troupes were another dynamic area of the business, both financially and aesthetically. Their blending of European circus traditions with non-European cultural mores made for a

No circus looked better on the lot, and none failed quite as grandly as the Moscow Circus which died in Orlando in May. James S. Cole photo.

hybrid circus, instantly recognizable and familiar, but infused and energized by a different world view. Together, the new wave and ethnic circuses were a formidable creative force. They represented, to use Earl Chapin May's wonderful phrase, another variation of the "ever changing never changing" nature of the circus.

The tiresome and tiring struggle with animal rights activists continued. The August death of an elephant owned by the King Royal Circus set off a fire storm by reinforcing the perception, abetted by the well-organized animal rights community, circuses take poor care of their animals. At least two shows lost bookings as a result of the incident, and another had an engagement canceled within hours.

The annual skirmishes took place. Letter to the editor columns were full of half truths and misrepresentations by activists. Legislative bodies debated, but in general did not pass, laws to restrict or eliminate the use of exotic animals on shows. Terrorist activity included putting "canceled" stickers over posters and animal sympathizers chaining themselves to poles or props. Picketing at show venues was a common sight. One

brochure passed out by protesters stated 5200 circus animals died each year, an absurd exaggeration.

Shows became more pro active in fighting the animalists. Circuses gave pamphlets to patrons defending their use of animals. Printed programs detailed the care circus animals received. Beatty-Cole's Khris Allen invited newspaper reporters to the lot to see first hand how his cats were treated. The Animal Care Association fought anti-circus legislation with great success, it would seem, and spoke for the industry to the media.

While many showfolks, particularly those with animals, were pessimistic about the future of animal exhibitions on circuses, the fact remained that the vast majority of people enjoyed trained animals on field shows and found nothing morally reprehensible about their being exhibited despite years of lobbying by animal rightists. While the amount of paperwork involved in owning exotic animals unquestionably increased in recent years, and many species could not be imported to the United States, legislation had not prohibited ownership of exotics, although it made it more difficult and in some cases, such as the Georgia law banning elephant rides, less economic. The situation seemed little changed previous years, with neither side making significant gains either in influencing public opinion or effecting legislation. It resembled nothing so much as the stalemate of trench warfare in World War I where one side, then the other, made marginal advances only to soon lose ground, all at a huge cost of blood and treasure.

Tented, side-walled, or open-aired, the outdoor branch of the business, while not the dominant format of past decades, was still a highly utilized mode of exhibition. With a few noteworthy exceptions, the tents lurked in small towns and suburbia, eschewing urban centers. The big top retained its hold on the American imagination, so much so, in fact, that tents and circuses were linked in the public mind even though most people had not seen a performance under canvas in years. Most shows in this sub-group were moderate size

with moderate nuts, working under the auspices of local service clubs such as the Lions or the Jaycees. While the "lot and license" days, when a show played a town without the support of a local civic group, were for the most part a thing of the past, there were indications that playing "cold dates," ones without sponsorship, was having a minor revival.

The Carson and Barnes Circus, headed by the legendary D. R. Miller and his family, opened in Paris, Texas in mid-March. After moving east into Louisiana in April, it back tracked to the Mountain, Plains, and Pacific states before returning to Texas in November. The season didn't last to the scheduled November 16 closing at Denton, Texas; because of the weather, the end came in San Angelo, Texas on November 13. The company traversed 15,096 miles in 35 weeks, playing 36 two and three-day engagements, a major increase in multi-day towns for what had been the last of the big one-night-stand operas. The season was not a financial success.

The menagerie had more animals than any other circus with a giraffe, hippo, rhino and 18 elephants. Under the huge big top appeared Joyce and Carmen Rosales in a cradle routine; Cindi Cavallini with a big and little act and later with six black Fresians; Donny Wagner with four small camels; Patti Frisco with dogs and ponies; Paul Hansmann with a Sicilian donkey; Chinese acrobats; Werner Edling with the cats; the Nunoz, Rosales, and Gonzales families on perch poles; the Flying Cavallinis and the Flying Morales; lots of Ro-



The Carson and Barnes Circus probably had the finest mechanical department of any show on tour, in part because of the rolling work shop in this semi-trailer. Joe Rettinger photo.

sales in two wheels of death; and Tim Frisco with the elephants. John Moss II was ringmaster and the music was on tape.

Late in the season, Jim Judkins, long-time general manager, left the company to start his own circus, thus ending a lengthy and mutually beneficial association. In October Gabriella Cavallini became the first female to do a quadruple somersault to a chair from a teeterboard.

The Clyde Beatty and Cole Bros. Circus, the other big perambulating tent, started the season in its Deland, Florida winter home in mid-March. Playing its usual route up and down the East Coast, the I-95 Circus, as it was called, rarely strayed too far from the Atlantic

Elvin Bale's cannon on Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. Circus at Norwalk, Connecticut on June 7. This year's cannonballer was the Raven, the "Bulgarian Bombshell." Sally Harwood photo.



Ocean before closing in Naples, Florida in late November. The tour covered 9674 miles, most of it coming every other day as the company played 73 two-day stands and only six of one day. The itinerary also included 26 three-day dates, 4 of four days, and one each of five and six days.

Owner John Pugh initiated major changes in the performance as the eight piece band, big clown alley, and show icon Fred Logan were replaced by a three piece electronically-enhanced group of musicians, a three person comedy troupe from Latin America and Brad Jewell. A number of other new personnel were hired. The lineup included Khris Allen with the cats, Gloria Bale with liberty horses, Svetlana Simvolokova and Andrei Kraftsov with dogs, the Kraftsov troupe on horizontal bars, Danny and Juan Rodriguez in the wheel of death, Brad Jewell with six elephants, the Casalinos clown troupe, the Petrov family on perch pole and rope jumping, and the Flying Lunas. Eli Tcholakian, known as the "Bulgarian Bombshell" and a member of the Petrov troupe, was Raven, the human cannonball. Leigh Ketchum led the band, and veteran Jimmy James was ringmaster.

Shakedown Department: The show blew a September date in Wilson, North Carolina because the sheriff, at the urging of the local fair manager, enforced a 1953 statute prohibiting circuses from playing the town within 30 days of the county fair. Beatty-Cole's lawyers suggested (in a nice way, one assumes) the fair manager might have pushed for the law's enforcement because the show didn't rent the fair grounds. Danny Rodriguez fell from the wheel of death at Tallahassee, Florida in late September, suffering a crushed vertebra, broken bones in his heel and ankle, and a mild concussion. He was off the remainder of the season. The day after the Naples closing, the show moved to Lake Helen, Florida where it was used as a back drop for a circus movie starring Mickey Rooney. The company hired a number of the performers from the ill-fated Moscow Circus in Orlando as prop hands. Rumors swept through the industry for much of the year



that Pugh was going to sell the circus to Kenneth Feld, mastermind of Ringling-Barnum.

Circus Vargas was almost exclusively a California concern, playing nearly all its dates in that state from early March to late November with many multi-day engagements in the metropolitan San Diego, Los Angeles and San Francisco areas. The 1996 deaths of two elephants from tuberculosis combined with the general sympathy toward animal rights on what is sardonically called the Left Coast caused the show to have more than its share of problems with animal activists. Orange County officials, in fact, lobbied unsuccessfully to bar the show because of the previous year's elephant problems. Nevertheless, the show, headed by Roland Kaiser and Joe Muscarello, came in a winner.

Under the single ring big top appeared, among others, Susan Lacey with the John Cuneo white tigers, clown Manny Valdo, jugglers Giovanni and Glydes Anastasini, hula hooper Vicki Fudini, musical clowns Italo and Francisco Fornasari, Dianne Arthurs with liberty ponies, Roman ringer Katia Farfan, Tibor Shalay on the bounding rope, George and Suzanne Fudini in plate spinning, and Chip Arthurs with Betty the elephant. Raul Rodriguez presented his sheepdogs for most of the season. When he left to join Ringling-Barnum he was replaced by Rafael and Isabel Abuhadba with their nine poodles. The midway had a petting zoo, pony sweep, moon bounce, and picture taking booth.

The Big Apple Circus, the Rolls Royce of sawdustdom, started out in late March with a six week run in Boston. Two dates in the New York City area followed before engage-

Circus Vargas was beautifully painted. Photo taken in Las Vegas. Fred D. Pfening, Jr. photo.

ments in Chicago and Cleveland. A series of New England stands followed with the spring-summer run ending, as usual, in Shelburne, Vermont in late July. The fall-winter season began in late September near Washington, D. C. The great, grand run in Lincoln Center in the heart of Manhattan followed, doing terrific business from late October to early January. Every performance was sold out, in fact, after about mid-December.

The spring-summer production was a reprise of the 1996 winter offering. Entitled "Medicine Show," it featured Johnny Peers with his dogs; Anatoli and Liubov Sudarchikov in a Russian magic act; hand balancers Sophie and Virgile; the seven member Eskin acrobatic troupe in a rope jumping routine and later in a big-time casting act; Katja Schumann Binder and her father Max with liberty horses; comedy acrobats James Clowney, Carlos Guty and Julian Stachowski; and William Woodcock with the elephants. Barry Lubin and Greg DeSanto were the clowns.

Father Jerry Hogan celebrated Easter mass in the ring in Boston, then flew to New York to conduct a similar service for Ringling-Barnum personnel in Madison Square Garden. The mid-June engagement in Chicago was near Soldier Field on the lake front, very close to where Forepaugh and Barnum rocked audiences a century ago. Unfortunately, the date was a total blank. The tent was evacuated on July 3 in Great Barrington, Massachusetts after a funnel cloud was spotted in the area; troupers had to evacuate the show grounds. The Slifka Family Creative

Center, the new winter quarters in Walden, New York, was dedicated in early September. Named after the family of long-time board chairman Alan Slifka, the complex had a fully equipped dance studio, three practice rings, and a stable. A 20th anniversary gala was held in Manhattan in May with entertainment by past Big Apple stars such as trick roper Vince Bruce and clown Denis Lacombe.

The fall-winter extravaganza was themed around the 20th anniversary. While Soleil veteran Guy Caron was the first artistic director not named Paul Binder, the performance maintained Binder's high standards as the lighting, pacing, music, costumes and mix of acts were all first-class. Changes were evident, however, such as the larger number of people used in the elephant act.

Bello Nock stole the show with his comedy trampoline act and his clowning, particularly a routine in an inflatable suit. Other acts included the Flying Jimmez, Bill Woodcock's elephants, juggler Arturo Alegria, Katja Schumann with her father and son with liberty horses, Elena Serafimovich on aerial rings, David Dimitri on low wire, and clown Barry Lubin. The Kuznetsovs, who did a Russian barre act, left the show late in the Lincoln Center run. Alegria was also off the bill after an injury; he was replaced by baton twirler Natalie Enterline. The line up was to have included Nadja Gasser with her sea lions, but the animals were denied approval to enter the country by the Agriculture Department.

Among new personnel were Russell Johnson who led an eight-piece band, and Brigitte Larochelle who composed the show's music. Ironically, a CD was released with music by Linda Hudes, the long-time composer, and played by Ric Albani, long-time band director, neither of whom were with the company. Lincoln Center presented a circus film festival while the circus was there entitled "The Celluloid Circus." Films included the rarely-seen 1924 Lon Chaney classic *He Who Gets Slapped*.

Cirque du Soleil had the greatest



Big Apple Circus founders Paul Binder (l.) and Michael Christensen celebrated 20 years of their celebrated circus. Paul C. Gutheil photo.

world-wide impact of any North American circus as its three units packed in audiences in America and Europe. The company employed 1250 people, by far the most of any circus in the world. The touring production, in its second year, was called "Quidam" which translated from Soleilese meant "a nameless passer-by or a soul that cries out and dreams and sings within us all." A plot, if it could be called that, was of a young girl, ignored by her parents, who day dreamed of acrobatics, rope jumping, web, juggling, and other circus arts. The production was designed, to quote the breathless prose of the program to "capture the frantic pulse of humanity awaiting the dawn of a new millennium."

Perceptively called a "Gothic" circus by Ernest Albrecht, this bad acid trip of a show reveled in the dark and mysterious aspects of life and art. It featured around 50 artists in generally conventional acts presented in strikingly unconventional ways with great choreography, bizarre costumes, cutting-edge lighting and new age music. The performance, although pretentious and preposterous in places, was nevertheless tremendously entertaining, especially, one gathers, to the wine and cheese crowd. This one was white collar all the way.

The company played extended

engagements under a 2500 seat big top in Cosa Mesa, Santa Monica, Oakland, and San Jose, California; and Denver and Houston. If it's Tuesday, this must be Scranton Department: Unions in Oakland picketed the show because non-union help was used to erect the tent. A compromise was reached and union workers assisted in the tear down, which was not the way Art Concello would have settled the problem.

"Mystere" continued its great run at Las Vegas' Treasure Island Casino where it was one of the town's hottest tickets. Around June the Alexis brothers, a world class hand balancing duo, joined the troupe. "Saltimbanco" finished its five year tour in London in early February while "Alegria" began its European tour in Amsterdam in March. In June filming started in Amsterdam on a movie based on "Alegria." Move Over Sarasota Department: The new winter quarters, which officially opened in Montreal in February, was the largest and finest complex of its type in the history of the planet with 500 people working at the site. On June 1, the show took a large ad in the *New York Times*, which wasn't notable except that the Gotham date didn't begin until ten months later. In July, founder Guy Laliberte received the Order National du Quebec, the highest distinction awarded by the provincial government.

The UniverSoul Big Top Circus played ten major cities starting with its home in Atlanta in March. Dates in Philadelphia, New York, Baltimore, Washington, D. C., Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, and Houston preceded the closer at Dallas in early December. The show had a new name as the "Universal" of the previous three seasons morphed into "UniverSoul" after a beef from Universal Studios.

Founded by music promoter Cedric Walker, it was the first black-owned circus since Turner Bros. in 1959. The only show to use largely African-



Program cover for the UniverSoul Big Top Circus. John Polacsek collection.

American personnel, both in and out of the ring, it marketed almost exclusively to the black community. The melding of traditional circus with African-American culture produced, at least to European eyes, some fascinating results such as the use of both classic soul music and the ethos of the self-help movement in the performance. Most striking was the show's unabashed conservative message in which values such as parental obedience, drug abstinence, and hard work were emphasized.

The Ayak brothers superb aerial act, seen here performing in Detroit, was among the features of the UniverSoul Big Top Circus. John Polacsek photo.



It was a first-class production with excellent lighting and sound systems under a 2500 seat, one-ring top formerly owned by Big Apple. Among the artists were Pam and Roger Zoppe with their chimps, Nayakata the contortionist, aerialist Pa-mela Hernandez, the Bafo Be Afrika aerialists, the King Charles unicycle troupe, the Ayak brothers on the trapeze, the Mocko Jumbie stilt dancers, magician Gilbert "Mr. Magic" Wright, Ted McRae with Vincent Von Duke's lions and tigers, and Margo Porter Lewis with Bobby Steele's elephants. Danise Payne, Russell Brown, and Jonathan Martin were clowns. Ring-

master "Casual Cal" Dupree, resplendent in Cab Calloway garb, had far more interaction with the audience than most other circus announcers, often leading it in chants or imparting self-help messages. He was assisted by Zander Charles aka Zeke. The music was on tape.

The King Royal Circus had a *Gus the Great* kind of season. The parent organization, headed by brothers John and Charles Davenport, had some sort of show on tour virtually the entire year. The Cavalcade of Cartoon Circus Stars, managed by Ben Davenport, was under canvas in Arizona in January with, one observer commented, a very weak performance; it was again sighted in May. Circus Cartoon Stars, another unit, this one promoted by Alan Hill, was indoors in New Jersey in February and Massachusetts in March. By at least April, King Royal, the mother troupe, was out in Louisiana and Miss-

issippi. It spent the summer on the plains and in the Midwest. Apparently the title of the main show was changed to Cavalcade of Cartoon Circus Stars by October when it was in Indiana and Kentucky.

For all the stealth route and title changes, King Royal had one of the year's most intriguing performances. Among its features were a giraffe and pygmy hippo, both the only ones of their species to perform in North America. Also on the bill were the Poemas with their boxing kangaroo, three rings of liberty horses, liberty llamas, Mike Rice with the cats and later with his comedy horse LeRoy, and the Alphonso Loyal riders starring Lucy Loyal. Other animals included a camel, emu, goats, par-

rots, mules, and, of course, elephants. The music was on tape. It was, overall, a charmingly rude, crude presentation distinguished from other field shows by its unique exotic animal routines—at least until August 6 when the world ended.

Early in the year, John Davenport of King Royal fame toured an indoor show. The free children's ticket shown here is for a February date in Bridgeton, New Jersey. Tim Tegge collection.



That day, police in Albuquerque, New Mexico opened a semi-trailer owned by John Davenport and found a dead six year old African elephant named Heather. Eight llamas and two other elephants also in the truck were placed in the Albuquerque Zoo. The driver, a son of Davenport's, and a handler were cited for cruelty to animals, improper care, and leaving an animal unattended in a vehicle. Davenport's license to own exotic animals was suspended for twenty-one days.

In early October, an administrative judge was asked by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, the governmental agency regulating exotic animals, to levy the maximum penal-

ty against Davenport which included permanent revocation of his license. About this time, the inevitable celebrities, including actors Judge Reinhold, Ali McGraw, and perennial circus industry favorite Kim Bassinger, got into the act, posturing, emoting, and generally misrepresenting things in the media. Their involvement made the incident a national news story,

particularly on the television shows which chronicled the activities of movie stars. In December the ruling came down. Davenport was found guilty of violating the Animal Welfare Act, fined \$200,000, and his license to operate as an exhibitor under AWA sanction was permanently revoked. By year's end, Davenport had started the appeal process. The entire incident was the industry's worst dream come true. The media coverage, uniformly negative, was a public relations disaster and another setback for the circus in its hundred year war with animal rights supporters. Little wonder, King Royal pulled the plug on its web site soon after the dead elephant was discovered.

After opening in its hometown of Hugo, Oklahoma in mid-March, the Kelly-Miller Circus, owned by David Rawls, sojourned in the border and southern states through May before moving into the Midwest and mid-Atlantic states where it stayed until mid-July. Ontario was next on the itinerary before the late August return to the Midwest with the end coming at Spiro, Oklahoma in late October. In all, the 13 show-owned rigs and 15 trailers owned by the personnel covered a hair over 10,000 miles of pavement during the 33 week tour. This was a one night stand affair with only nine 2-day stands, and three 3-day stands. One of the towns on the Canadian leg of the tour was St. Thomas, Ontario, where Jumbo went to heaven in 1885.

The three year old Italian-built tent measured 120 feet by 130 feet. The one ring exhibition included the Flying Perez,



Kelly-Miller Circus midway on a grassy lot on a nice day. Edward P. Meals photo.

sword balancer Pepe Vital, the Perez brothers on the high wire and later in the wheel of death, Cindy Herriott Wells with liberty horses, the Vital family in a bow and arrow act, aerialist Sasha Rawls, jugglers Denito and Dole Vital, and Roy Wells with the elephants. Brett Hood was ringmaster and Lou and Lou Ann Ives provided the music. A small menagerie contained a camel, three donkeys, a zonkey, six horses and three elephants. Walter Estes' snake show was among the midway attractions.

Bentley Bros. Circus, a side-walled affair often playing grandstands, hurrahed from April to September. The company played its usual route, opening in the West before moving into the Midwest in June, then heading East for the concluding segment of the itinerary. On and off throughout the year partners Chuck Clancey and Tommy Bentley toured phone-promoted, hybrid magic shows-circuses called Spies in the Night 1997, M. Charles Productions, and doubt-

Semi-trailer for Bentley Bros. at Zanesville, Ohio in the spring. Fred D. Pfening, Jr. photo.



less other titles in school gyms.

When the Bentley show played a fairgrounds near Cincinnati in June for the Fireman's Protective Association, the talent included Robert Moyer with the cats; Maya Zerbini with dogs; Jack Cook with his comedy car; Walter Murcia and Felix Toscana on

the high wire and later in an aerial cradle; the Ramos family in risley, hand balancing, hula hoop, and hair hang routines; Elio and Iris Gomez in the wheel of death; human cannonballer Dave Smith; and the eclectic Dianne Moyer with camels, liberty horses, dogs, and finally the elephants. Scott Taylor was ringmaster, and a live drummer and dead tapes provided the music.

Circo Hnos. Vasquez or Circus Vasquez, a Mexican company, made its third tour of the United States. Reflecting the ethnic diversity and immigration trends of recent years, the show marketed almost exclusively to Hispanic audiences, mainly using Spanish language radio and television. Under a one ring Canobbio big top similar to one owned by Tommy Hanneford, the troupe played shopping centers around Houston in April, then moved on to Dallas and Fort Worth, all areas with large Latino populations. One unconfirmed report had the show going as far north as Chicago. Brothers Guillermo, Jesus, and Ramon Vasquez ran this unit. Another, called Latino Americano Show, was managed by a fourth brother.

Talent in the two hour Vasquez performance included Miguel Fernandez on the bounding rope, low wire, and juggling; the Fazzios in casting, hand balancing, and perch pole acts; clowns Jesus Vasquez and Lucho Navarro; Guillermo Vasquez with the elephant Maya; and aerialist Luis Navarro. Joe Horwath and his wife and son did a gorilla parody. Horwath, 82, was a Dailey Bros. veteran who



Circus owners (l. to r.) Robert "Red" Johnson of Culpepper and Merriweather, David Rawls of Kelly-Miller, D. R. Miller of Carson and Barnes, and John Walker of Walker Bros at the Sarasota Circus Festival in January. Fred D. Pfening, Jr. photo.

later worked the cat act on Ringling-Barnum. Frank Berosini was the ringmaster and the music was on tape. Miguel Fernandez missed part of the season after breaking some ribs during his bounding rope act. Three members of the Espana family came on as replacements.

Franzen Bros. Circus proved life wasn't fair, as if another example of that lesson was needed. Owner Wayne Franzen was a former high school industrial arts teacher who built his circus with his own hands, taught himself how to train exotic animals, put on about half his show's displays, and hurrahed it through good times and bad for almost a quarter century. He was extraordinarily hard working, and notoriously calm and ethical, having, for example, the lowest concession prices in the business because it bothered him to put the standard mark up on soda. This man who personified what a showman ought to be was gored to death by a tiger named Lucca on May 7 in Carrolltown, Pennsylvania. All other information on the show's season was inconsequential.

Nevertheless, a few facts follow for the record: The company had its usual Florida mini-tour in January. It was in the South early in the regular tour, the Midwest and East in the spring and summer, and the South again late in the season. Brian Franzen, belying his 22 years, took over his father's cat act on June 24.

Additionally, he worked a liberty camel and llama routine, liberty horses, and the elephants, obviously inheriting the family work ethic. At year's end the program also included juggler Michelle Dion, chair balancer Danny Carey, Tavana Luvas on trapeze, and clown and plate spinner Brent DeWitt.

Aerialist Natalie Dionne, daughter of veteran Phil Chandler, broke her back in New York state in early June. She was out to the rest of the season. In a sad irony, CNN aired a feature on the circus, four days after Franzen's death, which was the most positive television piece on mud shows in years. At year's end Brian Franzen gave up the ghost, telling reporters he was closing the family business because he could not meet expenses. It was a sad ending to one of the most honorable circuses in history.

Roberts Bros. Circus saw the South, Midwest and East from March to October. Features at the March 9 opening at Bradenton, Florida included Kurt and Heidi Casady on perch pole and aerial cradle, Steve Janzac on an unsupported ladder and later juggling, Denise Earl with poodles and later with Princess Tequila the Wonder Horse, Heidi Casady on Roman rings and later foot juggling, and Ken Benson as Zeke the Mountain Man with Lula Belle the educated mule and with Lisa the elephant. Joe B. Dick, Bill Dusell and Dale Miles provided the mirth. Ringmaster Brian LaPalme also ate fire and performed illusions. The tour was the troupe's 25th, all under the direction of the Doris Earl family.

The Culpepper and Merriweather

Circus didn't have a very good season. Reports circulated in late summer that owner Robert "Red" Johnson had sold the show to Jim Judkins, and the company had declared bankruptcy. Neither was true, but the troupe's September 27 closing, a month earlier than usual, suggested a bad year. After opening in early March the show played its typical western route of mostly one day stands, although fourteen dates were 2-dayers, and three lasted 3 days. In-ring talent included Bobby and Lauren Fairchild with whips, knives, and cloud swing; the Ayala family with risley, double trapeze, and hula hoops; Jian Wen and Rong Qian with juggling and hand balancing; Josie Sabatino with a big and little dog act; Jerry Bradley in a stilt walking, fire eating routine; and Mike Swain with the elephants Barbara and Connie. Allison Cainan and Andy Scharff clowning. When Cainan and the Qians left the show in late May, Scharff added two clown bits, and Casey Cainan added his juggling routine. The ringmaster was Dean Gerard and a two person band backed up the acts.

Walker Bros. Circus, owned by John Walker, tramped around the South, East and Midwest for 34 weeks starting in late March. Stars of the one-ring exhibition were Laura Herriott with dogs and ponies, foot juggler Janie Loter, Jennifer Walker on web, George Stoykov on the unsupported ladder, Barney and Janie Loter with Doubleshot the comedy horse, Bennie Fornasari on a trampoline and later on a skateboard, clown David Williams, and juggler Jason Walker. The program was *sans* elephants. Ringmaster Bill Brickle also worked his poodles. The music was provided by Alan Thompson. Circus model builder Richard Albright had his calliope on the show for a few days in May, giving concerts before the show and during intermission.

Vidbel's Olde Tyme Circus rambled around the East and Upper South from late April through mid-October, just short of 26 weeks. The tent, a single ringer, was an 80 foot round top with a 40 foot middle section. On the bill were the Alberto Zoppe riders featuring Tosca Zoppe, Dusty



Posters were an important part of most tent shows marketing budgets. This late September Roberts Bros. daub was put up by Joe Schmitt and Michelle Malvern. Cam Cridlebaugh photo.

O'Donnell with his dogs, Nino and Peggy Murillo in a cradle act and later on a perch pole, the Altier bow and arrow routine, Jennifer Vidbel with eight liberty ponies, Susan Vidbel in a cloud swing and later with birds, Cossack riders, and juggler Rob Lange. In September, clowns Greg and Karen DeSanto joined after closing with Big Apple. Dan McCallum was ringmaster and Wynn Murrah led a two person band. The season was the company's first without an elephant in the performance.

The Alain Zerbini Circus saw parts of the East, Midwest and South from May until October. Usually a one-ring one dayer, the company played two Southern fairs in September and October. Acts included clown Willy Waltens, juggler and rolling globler Tina Waltens, and the Pad-illa duo with magic. Owner Alain Zerbini did

Midway pit shows were still popular on tent circuses. Roberts Bros.' Giant Jungle Snake show is pictured here. Dan McGinnis, Sr. photo.



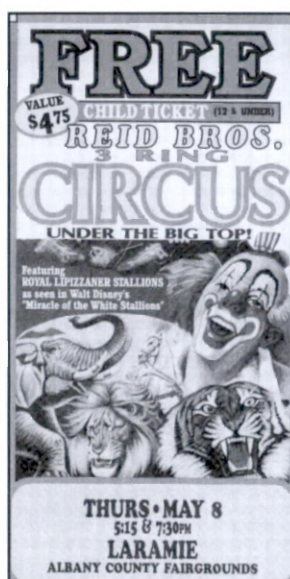
the first time, started off in the Northwest in April and moved farther east on the spring-summer route than in past years by going into Minnesota and Wisconsin where the show had a blow down in Janesville. Among the talent was Mary Ruth Herriott with her dog and pony act and Linda Herrmann with her horses. A fall tour began in late September and was documented through late October in at least Kentucky and Georgia, virgin territory for the title. Performers on these dates included Wilson Barnes with his tigers, Paul Costano with his jargo-elephant dog, the Espana troupe on the trampoline and Russian swing, the Martine duo in the wheel of death, three leased George Carden elephants, and Linda Herrmann with her Royal Lipizzan and Arabian stallions. Senor Rai was ringmaster and the music was on tape.

Allen Bros. Circus started the season as an indoor show, but switched to under canvas in the spring. While the company hardly spilled any ink in the trade press, it did have some

a sword balancing routine and he and his family presented a barnyard fantasy and a gorilla parody.

Reid Bros. Circus, headed by Richard and Ian Garden rather than John and Betty Reid for

with llamas, miniature goats, emus, donkeys, and horses on the midway. While performing personnel came and went, at one time the in-ring talent included Steven Mehohoff with the cats; Ken Taylor on trapeze, upside down walk and foot juggling; and Servaudo Hinososa with a long-rein miniature horse. Ringmaster Dick Johnson also did magic. At some dates, apparently, Johnson and Taylor put on the entire performance. Prior to the tour, owner Allen Bedford had said he would not take out his circus in 1997; the results of the season suggested his initial impulse was correct as the year was not a winner.



Free child's ticket by Reid Bros. Circus, owned by Ian and Dick Garden. Bobby Gibbs collection.

The L. A. Circus, a non-profit, strutted in its namesake city and its environs from the spring until the end of the year, generally playing weekends. Produced by Wini Mc-Kay, the performance included Debra Zitzelberger and Darlene Williams on web, Sammy Waltens on rola bola and chair balancing, clowns Larry

Pisoni and Jeff Taub, eleven year old Jerod Kelly on rolling globe, foot juggler Chester Cable, hula hooper Matt Pendel, juggler Dario Vazquez, and Kari and Gary Johnson with their elephant Tai. Stephanie Naife was singing ringmistress.

The show got a great gig at Universal Studios park from late November to early January 1998 under a new big top. The performance was similar except for the addition of the Argentine Gauchos and Rebecca Perez on the trapeze. The Johnson elephant act was eliminated after squawks from animal rightists, an ominous sign of the power of those groups.

Circus Flora, the St. Louis-based new waver founded by David Balding, was in Norfolk, Virginia in early May as part of an arts festival.

In early September the show participated in the prestigious Kennedy Center's "A Salute to the Circus," in Washington, D. C. Flora was lead circus, giving its regular performance, while Ringling-Barnum, and other sawdust denizens presented lectures and special events including a sky walk by Tino Wallenda-Zoppe from the Kennedy Center's roof to the top of Flora's new big top. Seven parade wagons from the Circus World Museum were also part of the occasion.

The show moved on to Houston for a September 26-October 5 engagement for the Children's Museum. The title of the performance was "The Triumph of Zephyr," and reportedly had less theater and more circus than previous editions. Kinkers included Giovanni Zoppe in his loop the loop act and as Nino the clown, Cecil MacKinnon as Yo Yo the clown, the Tino Wallenda-Zoppe family on the high wire, a double cloud swing by Sacha Pavlata and Aurelia Wallenda, and the Arturo Gaona Flyers. Janine Del Arte directed a five piece band. The year concluded with a late December date in Scottsdale, Arizona.

The Circus with a Purpose, the non-profit show founded by Michael Sandlofter and his wife Sharon Vidbel Sandlofter, was out about six months in the New York-New Jersey area. It moved on four tractor trailers, three straight beds, and two pickup trucks. When the company played the Altamont, New York fair in August, the hour and fifteen minute show included an anti-drug message. Talent on this date included the Karem Cossack riders, the Murillo family bareback troupe, Richard and Milton Murillo with a comedy pony act and later on the high wire, Sadie Sandlofter on web and trapeze, and Sharon Sandlofter with Caesar the leopard, a dressage horse and a big and little act. The show's giant Belgian horse, appropriately named Goliath, was used in the movie *For Richer or Poorer* with Tim Allen and Kirstie Alley.



Circus Flora was the showcase troupe at the Kennedy Center circus festival in September. J. Kurt Spence photo.

The Padilla Bros. Circus played near the Texas-Mexico border in the spring, and later moved up to Houston to battle the Latino American Show, another Mexican concern playing to Hispanics in this country. The tent housed two or three rings, depending on the size of the town. Acts included a unicycle turn, musical clown, hula hoop, rola bola, dogs, aerial routines, and house cats presented by a Ukrainian which is something you don't see every day. Owned by the Padilla brothers, the troupe also featured Jim Zajicek with

Circus Dolarea closed shortly after it opened in California early in the year, but not before contracting for this nice poster. Bill Biggerstaff collection.



an elephant, juggler Ricardo Aguilar and the Padilla-Bells flying act.

Circus Dolarea was another troupe catering to Spanish-speaking audiences. Owned by meat packer Todd Frelinger and his wife Guillermina Dolarea, the show used a Canobbio tent seating 2500, and featured Aztec and Inca production numbers. Alas, it folded after only two stands in the Los Angeles area after a worker's compensation problem. After Dolarea bit the dust, the equipment, which had originated on the Dream Clown Circus a few years ago, was used on El Circo De Capulina, yet another Hispanic-oriented circus which appeared at a couple of swap marts in Las Vegas and in Southern California in the fall. The Mexican National Circus' existence was murky. Owned by Roberto and Yenavida Campa, it supposedly made two mini-tours under canvas in Canada before June 1. In all, six Hispanic circuses traveled in North America.

Once every year, as regularly as taxes it seemed, a Russian circus in America failed spectacularly, always amid much publicity which emphasized the plight of the standard performers and the avarice of the managers. The Moscow Circus, this year's victim, opened in early March in Orlando. Produced by Alex Valdez, the show had a strong program with bears, horses, dogs, leopards, jugglers, flyers, acrobatics and other specialties, all performed by Russians. Attendance was weak from the start. One performance was canceled after only ten people bought tickets in a tent seating about 1000. When the show closed in early May, performers laid down in front of the crane called in to dismantle the big top. By that time the company had reportedly lost over a million dollars.

It got worst. The bears were confiscated. The personnel, who had not been paid for months, were evicted from their condos. Plans for a reorganization or a benefit performance never materialized. The showfolks ended up living off donations. Some joined the Beatty show as prop hands.

By January 1998, all but a few of the people who wished to return to Russia had done so, and plans were underway to get the equipment and animals back home.

The Pan-Twilight Circus, after taking a hiatus in 1996, had an eight week tour of Rhode Island and Massachusetts from late June to early August. Alert readers will remember two years ago the show's theme was lawn and garden insects. This season the production's title was "Prospero's Magic Island or A Tempest Under the Big Top," and was, and we are not making this up, based on William Shakespeare's play *The Tempest*. Elements of the play were presented with circus acts woven into the plot. The political aspects of the story were axed, according to Bob Colonna who conceived the show, because they were "not very circusey." In real life, Colonna was the artistic director of the Rhode Island Shakespeare Theater in Newport. Advertising posters showed Shakespeare wearing a red clown's nose.

Kinkers included Jans Larson who did Roman rings, acrobatics, and chair balancing as well as portraying the butler Stephano. Other performers were Chelsea Bacon and Jennifer Richman-Cohen, both graduates of the San Francisco School of Circus Arts, who appeared on trapeze, cloud swing, web and acrobatics. Nick Goldsmith was Trincula the Jester, in other words the show's clown. The single ring presentation was backed by a six piece band under a 300 seat top. Produced by Tom Sgouros, who also juggled in the performance, the show was a non-profit funded by the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts. The production's mixing of the Bard of Avon and tan-bark reminded erudite observers that in the early nineteenth century, equestrian and other acts were commonly incorporated into Shakespearean plays.

Circuses which sold their product in buildings were the biggest segment of the industry. These aggrega-



Finale of the Moscow Circus in Orlando. The small audience is giving the troupe a much-deserved standing ovation while the vast majority of seats are empty. James S. Cole photo.

tions played virtually everywhere from the largest metropolitan arenas to the smallest rural armories.

Occasionally maligned for not representing "real" circus, as if the venue and not the performance was the distinguishing characteristic, they had been the backbone of the business for years, providing more entertainment than any other variation of the spangled world.

The indoor segment's growth was fueled by the large number of arenas which opened in the last twenty years. They profoundly altered the industry's calendar, making the early months of the year a more active period for circus than the summer. Without doubt, more North Americans attended performances under a roof than other type of space.

Always the biggest star in the arenic sky, Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey's two units continued to define extravaganza while constantly innovating and reinventing themselves. The Red unit, the new production, opened in Tampa on December 27, 1996, after which it played up the Atlantic coast before reaching the New York City area where it appeared at three venues, including a March 20 to April 6 stand at fabled Madison Square Garden. The eighteen days at the Garden were the show's shortest run ever at that historic building. Circus officials cited the expense and inconvenience of striking the props and rigging so

the Knicks or Rangers could appear in playoff games. It was the final triumph of sports over circus, a conflict whose first volley was fired in 1929 when John Ringling wouldn't sign the 1930 contract with the Garden because the circus had to vacate on sports nights. Other Eastern cities

followed before the company moved into Lexington, Kentucky from which it jumped to Albuquerque, a 1685 mile move, the season's longest. Western dates followed, including almost two months in California. The company headed back to the Midwest in October before calling it a year at Huntsville, Alabama in early December. In all, 14,219 miles of railroad track were traversed. The company moved on 53 railroad cars, 31 coaches, 4 stocks, 2 container flats, and 16 piggyback flats.

The Guerrero high wire act was the performance's feature with the big trick of a seven person pyramid, the first ever presented on Ringling-Barnum. Many commentators linked them with the Wallendas, forgetting that the Wallendas didn't attempt the seven until after they had left Ringling-Barnum. Tragedy struck on February 11 at Richmond, Virginia when Walfer Guerrero, 28, fell about 30 feet during the act while jumping over another performer on the wire and was unable to catch himself. He suffered severe back injuries and was in critical condition at one point. The act was off the program for about three weeks as a result.

Zusha, the Queen of the Nile, a trained hippo from Canada by way of Russia, was also on the bill. Among other turns, she trotted around the ring while carrying a baboon on her back. Other attractions included clown David Larible, Emil Popescu with his sea lions, the Sallay teeterboard troupe, the King Charles unicycling basketball players, the Ripple brothers in a living statue routine, the Flying Caballeros, and Mark Oliver Gebel with liberty horses,

tigers and elephants. Of special note was the display of the baby elephants, Kenny, Bonnie and Juliette, all born at the Ringling-Barnum elephant breeding farm in Florida. It was the first time in circus history that three American-born punk elephants appeared in the same ring. Eric Michael Gillett was ringmaster and Mark Van Cleave was band leader. Gillett left at year's end after eleven seasons.

The unit was apparently neither an artistic nor a financial success. The program was tinkered with in California during the summer and again in Chicago in November, with some changing of routines and production numbers. One unabashed success on both units, however, was the Three Ring Adventure in which the audience descended to the arena floor for an hour before show time to juggle, try on costumes, swing from a trapeze, and walk a (very) low wire. An expanded version of the Ringling Adventure concept of the previous year, the interactive approach struck a responsive chord with both children and adults. At some dates, the audience was also allowed to go through the menagerie.

The Blue unit, in its second go-round, opened in West Palm Beach, Florida on December 27, 1996 before going on to other southern states, Midwestern and mid-Atlantic states followed before the April jump to Mexico City for a 25 day engagement. Returning stateside, the show played the Southwest, South, and Midwest before closing in St. Louis in early November. Like other second year routes of the Ringling-Barnum shows, this one had a number of smaller towns on the itinerary such as Lubbock, Wichita, and Tupelo, along with large ones such as Dallas, Detroit, Boston, and biggest of all, Mexico City. The February 9 performance at Atlanta's Omni was the last in that venue after 25 years. When the troupe rolled into Cincinnati on March 4 it found the parking lot, backyard and arena floor flooded. The entire five-day date was lost and the show moved on to



Audience enjoying the 3 Ring Adventure on Ringling-Barnum before show time at Albany in April. This interactive innovation was a big hit. Dan McGinnis, Sr. photo.

Baltimore. In total, the company traveled 17,749 miles with the jump from Charleston, West Virginia to Mexico City the year's longest, 2460 miles. The train consist of 54 cars included 32 coaches, 3 stocks, 2 container flats, 1 bi-level car, and 16 flats. Among the coaches were the shop, utility, pie, and power generator cars.

The performance was almost identical to the previous year's with Airiana the Human Arrow the headliner. Other acts included juggling by Gena Shvartsman, the Ivankos and Aydar Rakhmatoullinn; the Svenson's riding act; Marguerite Michelle Ayala in a hair hang; Samson Power in an iron jaw act; the Quiros on the high wire; Graham Thomas Chipperfield with the lions and later the elephants; the Flying Tabares; contortionist Aishan Usenbekova; a troupe of Chinese acrobats; the Gourianov family on the teeter board; John Misita with his Frisbee-chasing dogs; the Eshimbekova Cossack riders; and a spider web production number. The Flying Vargas left the company at season's close after nine years.

Clown College was in session in Sarasota in August and September with a brilliant faculty including David Larible, Bill Irwin, Barry Lubin, Larry Pisoni, Peter Pitofsky, Jeff Razz, and school head Dick Monday. Soon after graduation, twenty of the newly-minted funsters made their professional debut at the

Texas State Fair in Dallas where they starred in the Big Shoe Clown Review, a 30 minute clown show. Early in 1998, it was announced the school would be discontinued, although the door was left open that it might reopen as a graduate school to which show clowns would return to hone and sharpen their skills.

Besides the circus, Feld Entertainment, the parent organization also operated as

many as nine touring ice shows, the Siegfried and Roy magic show at Las Vegas' Mirage Hotel and Casino, and opened a show called Madhattan at the New York, New York Hotel and Casino in Vegas. The latter starred clown Dick Monday and unicyclist Alexander Chervotkin. Most of the ice shows had Disney themes. Starlight Express, the first ice show not based on a Disney or other children's classic, was a flop, closing not long after opening. In other bad ice show news, an employee of one of the icers was indicted by a grand jury on charges of defrauding the company out of \$150,000.

There was lots of turnover of personnel. Long-time chief financial officer Charles Smith was dropped as was veteran Michael Franks of the marketing staff. The Center for Elephant Conservation welcomed two new guests with the births of Angelica and Doc, the latter named after Dr. Richard Houck, long-time show veterinarian. Owner Kenneth Feld was declared, or so said *Forbes Magazine*, the 291st richest person in the country with an estimated worth of \$650,000,000, up from a measly \$575,000,000 the year before. Irvin Feld, Kenneth's late father and company founder, was inducted into the Amusement Business Hall of Fame along with legendary agent William Morris. Where are They Now Department: Former ringmaster Kristopher Antekeier, who wrote something of a tell-all book in 1989, had a syndicated television series for kids called "Barnyard Place."

Super Cirque, owned by Marc Verreault, made one dayers in Quebec and Ontario for about five

weeks starting on May 1. It was a fairly good-sized company, playing hockey rinks in French-speaking communities with announcements in that language. Among the tan-bark talent were Shane Johnson with the cats, and fire eater Satani Demon aka Christiaan DeGraaf. From December 26 to January 4, 1998, Verreault had a three ring

show in Montreal at the Molson Center and Quebec Coliseum. Called the Giant Holiday Circus in a triumph of uncreative titling, the acts included Raul and Marilyn Segura with their inclined motorcycle, Tina Zamperla with horses and dogs, Irvin Hall with baboons, fire eater Satani Demon, Hans Winn in a globe of death, the Hartzells with their cross-bow act, the Flying Redpaths, and clown Vincent A. Pagliano. Pierre Jean was ringmaster.

Cirque Ingenieux was a major new player among new wavers. Produced by Neil Goldberg, the show was framed at Bally's Casino in Atlantic City during the summer where a shorter version of the touring production was given. The Broadway veterans who directed, choreographed and costumed the company gave it an ethereal, other-worldly feel; it was sort of a benign Soleil. In fact, Ingenieux newspaper ads quoted a critic who said the show was "better than Soleil." That was hyperbole; it was, however, cheerier and brighter than its Canadian cousin. Often appearing as part of a theater series, the troupe attracted up-scale audiences, who wouldn't walk across the street to see Carson and Barnes.

The plot, such as it was, concerned a little girl's dreams of circus glory after attending a turn of the century show. Among the sawdust skills featured were juggling, trapeze, magic, rola bola, risley, head balancing, web and clowning. Of particular note were Undarma Darihue and Otgo Waller from Mongolia in an excellent contortionist act, and Jarolslaw Marciniak and Dariusz Wronski in a fabulous living statue routine. The music was by someone named Kitaro who is apparently to new age music

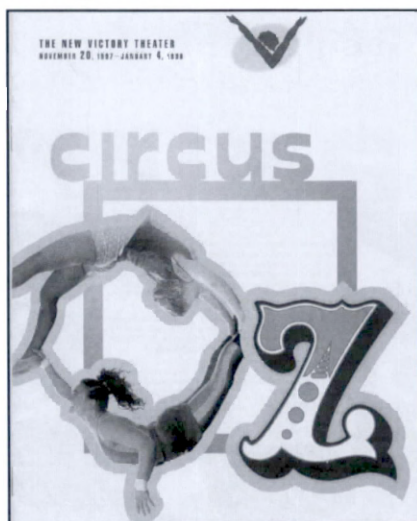


Ringling-Barnum blue unit flats near Cincinnati, the engagement that never happened. Bill Rhodes photo.

what Bach is to classical. The overall effect was electrifying with first-class acts performing within a cocoon of first-rate production values.

The New Pickle Circus played high-end venues, often performing arts centers in California and the East, on and off from February to year's end. "The Big Bang . . . and Other Rude Noises," the new production, was the feature at the annual December engagement in San Francisco. Directed and choreographed by Tandy Beal, the show started, and we're on the level here, with a mom and dad clown being transported back to the moment of the universe's creation with the help of a friendly alien. Eventually they

Program cover for Circus Oz, the Australia import which appeared in New York City at year's end. Sandy Pfening collection.



make it back to their clown children. The acts had a deep space back drop. Among the kinkers were juggler and low wirer Jamie Adkins, acrobats Francisco and Raphael Cruz, aerialist Aloysia Gavre-Wareham, and trick cyclist Sylvain Dubois. Stephanie Thompson and Joe Krienke were clowns. Lu Yi of China's famous Nanjing

acrobatic troupe created the acrobatic acts.

Cirque Eloize played college campuses and other venues in at least the East and Midwest. "A Journey into the Imagination," as the show was unimaginatively called, presented ten performers, mostly Cirque du Soleil alumni who had attended the Ecole Nationale du Cirque in Montreal. A new waver that eschewed animals, the performance, the same as the previous year's, combined theater and dance with circus arts such as juggling, hand balancing, and clowning. Jeannot Painchaud was artistic director.

Circus Oz, an Australian import, appeared at a Times Square theater in Manhattan from late November until early January 1998. The iconoclastic performance presented by a starless ensemble included such off-beat acts as a comedy living statue routine, and an upside-down recreation of the famous bar scene from the movie *Casablanca*. The costumes had a nerdy quality to them with lots of plaids and prints together, and the music often changed from classical to heavy metal and back again during the same act. Overall, the production had a lighthearted, almost silly, feel, which obviously pleased audiences as most of the run was sold out. It was if as the New Pickle Circus and Cirque du Soleil had produced off-spring.

Circo Zoppe Europa appeared in performing arts facilities in the East during the year's last quarter. The performance, entitled "Buon Natale" meaning Good Christmas, was produced by Sandy Taylor Zoppe, wife of owner Alberto Zoppe. It was themed around two children finding a magical circus trunk on Christmas Eve.

Combining elements of Sarasota and Broadway, the displays included Tosca Zoppe on web, and the Alberto Zoppe riders.

The non-profit Make a Circus appeared in California recreation centers, auditoriums and municipal parks during the summer. Founded by Peter Frankham, the show proffered advice to inner-city kids as part of the performance. This was an interactive show as children were introduced to circus arts such as juggling, acrobatics, and trapeze, then encouraged to join the performers on stage. The production was called "The Great Big Rainbow Tent," even though the show didn't have one. Gary Lashinsky's Royal Lipizzan Stallion Show, in its 28th year, appeared throughout the United States and Canada. Additionally, the company had a permanent exhibition at Las Vegas' Excalibur Hotel and Casino. Circus Maranatha, a Christian circus headed by Tino Wallenda-Zoppe, appeared in Puerto Rico and Mexico during the year. Not many years ago, three or four spiritually-inspired shows were on the road; only this one remained.

Circuses sponsored by Shrine temples and other fraternal and charitable organizations, especially police and firefighter groups, were a major part of the business. This style of tanbark was often criticized because the generic title "Shrine Circus" prevented showmen from developing brand recognition and created the unfortunate situation in which producers competed on price rather than quality in negotiating contracts. Nevertheless, many were fine shows, often with first-class acts from Ringling-Barnum, Big Apple and major European companies. Many, if not most, performers preferred Shrine to tented dates because they generally offered better working conditions.

The annual mad scramble for dates occurred as temples sought new producers after beating down the old ones so much in price they were dissatisfied with the end product, thus perpetuating a destructive cycle. Some Shrine showmen attempted to recoup their investment by extending the intermission up to an unacceptable hour and a

half to squeeze as much revenue from the elephant and other rides as possible. The public's distaste for such antics was predictable. Worse, tensions continued between the Shrine Circus Association of North America (SCANA), the organization of Shrine circus chairmen, and circus producers over such issues as control of concessions. The circus men and women were well aware of their plight and many explored alternatives such as working directly with arena management.

The Royal Hanneford Circus was a major force in the Shrine circus business. Owners Tommy and Struppi Hanneford had a number of major temple bookings and as many as three units out simultaneously. When the show worked for Murat Temple in Indianapolis in early March, the in-ring talent consisted of the Marinofs on the trapeze, the Moroccan Connection in a tumbling routine, Adolfo Ponce on the low wire, the Mark Karoly riders, the Flying Caceres, Pedro Carrillo Jr. on the high wire, the Castros with their globe of death, and the Brett Bronson and Hanneford elephants. Old pro John Herriott was ringmaster, and

Great comic rider Mark Karoly, in one of his calmer moments, on the Royal Hanneford Circus at Schaghticoke, New York. Robert Sugarman photo.



Kay Parker led the band. Different performers were involved in mid-March's Shrine date at Lansing, Michigan: Sylvia Zerbini with her liberty horses and on the trapeze, Dana Kaseeva in a quick change act and with hula hoops, Johnny Peers with his dogs, comedy trampoliner Don Otto, and Lance Ramos with the cats and the elephants. Barry Lubin was Grandma the clown. Sevetlana Fernandez fell during the Lansing run when her safety harness snapped during a trapeze number with husband Miguel. She fell 30 feet, striking the ring curb. Injuries included a fractured tailbone and bruises.

Hanneford also had considerable non-Shrine work including major fairs in Columbus, Tampa, and Springfield, Massachusetts. A unit also appeared at the Palace of Auburn Hills in April and Milwaukee's Great Circus Parade in July. Acts playing the Palace included Kay Rosaire with her cats, the Flying Redpaths and the Castros and the Urias in the globe of death. During the summer the company entertained the masses at amusement parks in Ohio, Iowa, and Pennsylvania. Talent at the Hanneford Family Circus, as it was called, outside Des Moines included nephew George Hanneford III in a comedy riding routine, niece Cathy Hanneford with the elephants, Rebecca Perez on trapeze, and the Tino Cristiani trampoline act. The company completed a good year when the Tampa finale ended the season in early December.

The George Carden Circus was another big player in the Shrine universe. While much of its work was in the Midwest, the company also set up ring curb in the South, Southwest and East, and had a four month summer run as the Russian International Circus in eastern Canada. At times, two units were operated. One troupe played one dayers under canvas throughout Wisconsin during the summer under the auspices of Milwaukee's Tripoli Temple. Income from various rides and attractions was an important part of this show's revenues. At Louisville's Kosair Shrine date in

February, for example, the audience had the opportunity to see the petting zoo, jump on a moon bounce, ride an elephant or pony, get face painted, or have their photo taken with "Oink," the singing pig from Cousin Grumpy's Pork Chop Review.

When a unit played the Milwaukee Shrine in late February, the arenic artists were Louis Del Moral with his tigers, the Flying Rodogels, Cuzin Grumpy with his pigs, Dick Kohlreiser with his ponies and dogs, the Dancing Gauchos, the Winns with their inclined motorcycles, a Cossack troupe called Riders of the Night, the Panteleenkos on the aerial strap, Ramon Esqueda and Joe Browitz with the elephants, and Jennifer Smith as the human cannonball. At March's giant Detroit Shrine, North America's largest temple extravaganza, ringmaster Charles Vincent Amaral introduced the Flying Rodogels, the Flying Condors, Othmar Vohringer with the Hawthorn white tigers, juggler Justino Zoppe, Susan Sheryll with her Afghans, the Dancing Gauchos, Davide Zoppe's monkeys, Les "Cuzin Grumpy" Kimes with his pigs, and Joe Frisco with the Carden elephants. Frisco exited the company in May and was replaced by Walter Logan and his father Fred Logan, the latter the long-time Beatty elephant boss. The Logans later left when Frisco rejoined the show.

The Tarzan Zerbini Circus had a number of Shrine engagements in this country and Canada, starting with its traditional January opener at Fort Wayne, Indiana. When the company was in London, Ontario in early June, the bill listed the Hansen family in their rolling skating routine, juggler Shane Hansen, Gaylord Maynard with Chief Bear Paw, Martine Alvarez on Russian straps, Othmar Vohringer with the Cuneo white tigers, and Mike Donoho with the elephants. Joseph Dominick Bauer was ringmaster, and Larry Solheim led the band. When a unit appeared for the Springfield, Massachusetts Shrine in early May, the actors included the Galambos family with their soccer play-

ing dogs, Tammy and Joe Frisco with Broadway Joe the elephant, juggler Dieter Galambos, the Flying Caceres, William Voss with the Cuneo white tigers, Chepiabkova and Kim with horse-riding bears, Gaylord Maynard with his comedy horse, and cannonballer Brian Miser. Tim Tegge was ringmaster. Rumors the show had developed a new line of plush called Zerbini babies were unfounded.

Circus Gatti had its usual early February opening in Texas before heading to the Pacific and Mountain states and Western Canada for most of the year before closing in New Mexico in October. In the spring the company operated a second unit which played Utah and Idaho. About a third of its dates were for Shrines, a third for police and firefighter groups, and a third cold dates where the show went into a town *sans* sponsor, advertising heavily. While the troupe appeared for the Seattle, Portland, and Los Angeles Shrines, most of its temple dates were in smaller towns.

Among the talent was Yaro and Barbara Hoffman with the big cats, high wire walker Luis Acosta, Kimberly Zerbini with her dogs, the Flying Rivas, the Bautista family on the teeter board and perchpoles, the Sandu troupe in a strap routine and on the Russian barre, and John Pelton with the elephants. Emil Toca was bandmaster. On April 26, ringmaster Richard Curtis proposed to Kim Zerbini during a performance in Los Angeles. Owned by sisters Patricia and Carole Gatti, the show celebrated its 37th year under Gatti family leadership.

Garden Bros. Circus played its usual spring route in Canada without spilling a drop of ink in the trade

Semi-trailer for the George Carden Circus at the Louisville Shrine in February. Bill Rhodes photo.



press, thereby gaining the distinction of being the largest show in at least fifteen years to operate in total journalistic darkness. Owned by brothers Ian and Richard Garden, it appeared at London, Ontario on April 12-13, and at Toronto's Skydome sometime in the spring. Talent on the spring run included Jacqueline Zerbini with her tigers, the Ferras duo in a roller-skating routine, the Boger family with their bison, and human cannonball Luis Munoz. Robbie Redding was musical director.

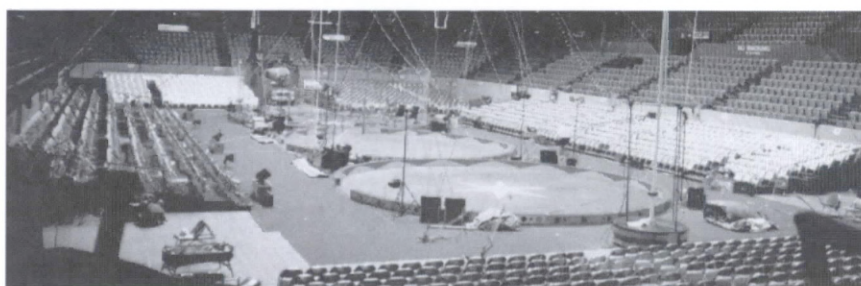
Circus America had Shrine and other sponsored dates in the East, plus a three and a half month run in Puerto Rico starting in February. Acts going to the Caribbean included Lilli Ana Kristensen with her exotic cats, and David Rosaire with his dogs. April's Harrisburg, Pennsylvania Shrine was among this opera's larger stateside appearances. Andre Skarbecki with his lions, the Winns with their sky cycles and sway poles, Carmen Hall with her baboons, the Shooting Stars on the Russian swing, the Flying Gaonas and the Flying Caceres, the Alfonso Suarez riders, and the Bill Morris elephants were among the acts at Harrisburg. David Weber was the ringmaster. Early in the year, owner Ed Migley sued the Athens-Clarke County government in Georgia for fraud and breach of contract over a financially disastrous show he put on at the time of the 1996 Atlanta Olympics.

The Hubler International Circus had Shrine, PTA and police dates, usually in the East and Midwest. Owner George Hubler, the pride of Dayton, Ohio, had had many of his dates for years. The Aut Mori Grotto Circus in Youngstown, Ohio, for example, was produced for the 33rd consecutive year in February. Brunon Blaszk with his tigers, Christine Herriott with liberty ponies, legendary juggler Dieter Tasso, the Espanas on the Russian swing, the Garzas in their living statue routine, the Flying Redpaths, and Ben Davenport with the elephants were among the acts for the Grotto. Bob Carabia led

the band. When the show appeared at Lake Placid, New York in late May, the talent consisted of Andre Skarbecki with the cats, Shane and Nicole Wright on the trampoline, the Darnells in their magic routine and later with poodles, the Galambos family with their dogs, Vladimir Rudenko on the high wire, Wendy Patterson Bell on Roman rings, Gary Sladek in a cloud swing, Bob Commerford's elephants, and human cannonball Luis Munoz. Charles Van Buskirk was the ringmaster.

The Hamid-Morton Circus, the most venerable of auspices circuses, had its usual February through June Shrine jaunt through the Southwest, Midwest, East and South. Owned by James Hamid Sr. and Jr., the third and fourth generation of the family in the business, the show was titled Circus Royale at some engagements. Among the actors at May's Binghamton, New York Shrine were Brunon Blaszak with the tigers, the Galambos family with their dogs, Gordon and Vickie Howle with their dogs, Christina Dubsky with her doves, Billy Vaughn with his clown car, Joe Phillips with his horse Golden Mist, Ashley Redpath with hula hoops, the Flying Redpaths, Dieter Galambos in chair and hand balancing, Brett Bronson with two African elephants, and the Winn family on sway poles. When the troupe played the Oklahoma State Fair in September the talent included the Flying Condors, aerialist Dolly Jacobs, the Galambos with their dogs, Andre Skarbecki with his lions, the Urias troupe in the globe of death, rola bolaist Pat Davison, the Tangier Troupe of Arab acrobats, and Lou Ann and Jorge Barreda with their elephants. David SaLoutos was ringmaster, making his first appearance away from the Circus World Museum.

The Jordan World Circus, headed by Patsy Jordan and her son Jody, had Shrine and other dates starting in January, mainly in the Midwest and West. When it appeared for the Flint, Michigan Shrine in early January, the traditional start of the new cir-

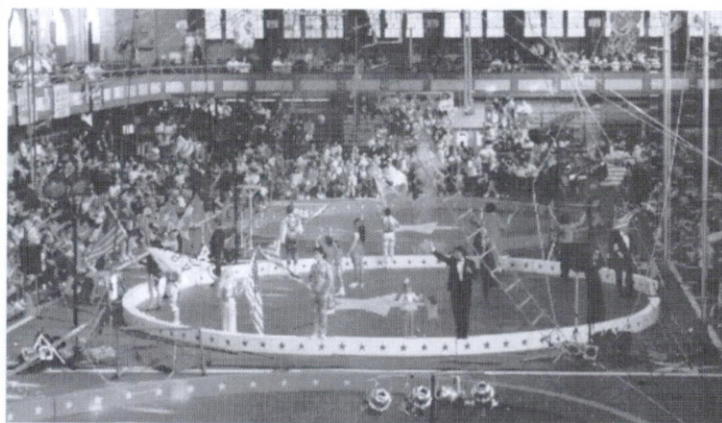


Tarzan Zerbini Circus at the Mizpah Shrine in Fort Wayne, Indiana on January 30. Tim Tegge photo.

cus year, the in-ring talent included Othmar Vohringer with the Hawthorn white tigers, the Flying Espanas, the Jordan globe of death, Ross and Elisa Hartzell with a cross bow act, Ari Steeples with his bears, Igor Kassaev in a Cossack act, Mike Rice with the ever-popular liberty llamas, Caroline MacKenzie with a liberty camel and zebra, Gaylord Maynard with Chief Bear Paw, and John Davenport's and Jorge Barreda's elephants. The ringmasters were Ari Steeples and Ross Hartzell, and Larry Stout had the band. The line-up differed during the western run in the late winter and early spring. Among the acts at Puyallup, Washington in early March were Jairo Obando with the lions and tigers, the Flying Ramirez, Los Gauchos, Ari Steeples with his bears, and the Geraldos on the high wire.

Plunkett Bros. Circus Shrined it in the Midwest, Southwest and South. When it appeared for the Monroe, Louisiana Shrine in early April,

Jim Hamid Sr. and Jr.'s Circus Royale at Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania in April. Paul C. Gutheil photo.



Larry Allen Dean with the tigers, Jim Hall with bears and later on a unicycle, Jeff Plunkett with his comedy car, Linda Herrmann with two long-rein horses, the Garza brothers in a living statue routine, the Espanas in flying return and globe acts, foot juggler Elaine Hall, and James Plunkett, the company's head, with the elephants were among the sawdust features. Cathy Rogers was the ringmistress, and John Millette led a seven piece band. The company also had another unit in Lafayette, Louisiana at the same time.

When the show was engaged by the Peoria, Illinois Shrine in mid-June, the acts included Chris Kilpatrick with the cats, Christina Dubsky with poodles and later birds, Jeff Plunkett with his comedy car, Christine Herriott Plunkett on an aerial lyre, Shane and Nicole Wright and the Espanas on trampolines, the Flying Espanas, foot juggler Fafaela Dalton, and James Plunkett with the elephants.

The Great Wallenda Circus had Shrine dates both in the United States and Canada, occasionally having two units on the road simultaneously. Many of the four weeks of dates in Canada were former Garden Bros bookings. The major American engagement was the Chicago Shrine from February 28 to March 16 where

the big draw was the local Bozo the Clown who was featured in the advertising and on the printed program's cover. Other performers included Chris Kilpatrick with the cats, Lyric Wallenda on the aerial lyre, Alfonso Loyal with liberty ponies, Pam and Roger Zoppe with their chimps, Valerie Wallenda on single trapeze,

the Flying Ojedas, George Bertini on a unicycle, Andre Schweizer on the wire, and Phil and Francine Schacht with Dondi the elephant. Tim and Giggi Tegge and Dave Williams were clowns. Ree Schweizer was ringmistress and Charles Schlarbaum led a wonderful thirteen piece band. Lucy Loyal was supposed to do her comedy riding act, but left the show due to her mother's illness; other members of her family filled in.

Among the talent at the Winnipeg Shrine in May were Wilson Barnes with his tigers, the Garza living statues, Jill Congalvas with swords, Brett Marshall on a BMX bike, David Connors on a unicycle, the Nock family in a wheel of death and on sway poles, the Flying Redpaths, Manuel Congalvas on a rola bola, and Bobby Gibbs with the elephants. Bill Boren was ringmaster and Larry Rothbard directed the band.

Clyde Bros. Circus, produced by Don Johnson, had Shrine bookings in Nashville in March, and Iowa in June. The engagement in Grand Forks, North Dakota was flooded out. On the Iowa dates the performance featured Wilson Barnes with the tigers, the Roberts duo in an aerial cradle, clown Happy Davis, the Galambos soccer-playing dogs, Skin and Bones with their pigs and later their dogs, the Artistas on aerial motorcycles, the Flying Espanas, Manuel Goncalves on a rola bola, and Doug Terranova with the elephants. In a new twist on an old act, Terranova lined up the bulls for Brett Marshall to jump over on his BMX bike. Bill Boren was ringmaster.

Serge Coronas' Circus Hollywood was a back-end attraction on the Strates Carnival in the spring, a 30 minute free show exhibiting three times a day. It also had Shrine and corporate dates. This one received minimal coverage in the trade press, and nothing is known of its performance except that Doug Terranova had his elephant on the Shrine date in Beaumont, Texas in late February. Circus Valentine, owned by flyer Ray Valentine, was another show that



Ken "Turtle" Benson of Roberts Bros. was well known throughout the industry for his routines with Lisa the elephant and as Zeke the Mountain Man with Lula Belle his mule. Cam Cridlebaugh photo.

received little media attention. Beyond its appearances in the Houston area in mid-October, nothing is known about it. All activity by Ron Kelroy went unnoticed in the trade press. One presumes he had his long-standing Shrine dates in Kentucky and the Rock Island, Illinois engagement, but evidence was lacking.

The George Coronas' Circus had a few temple dates, including a big one for Yaarb Temple in Marietta, Georgia in early May. When a second unit played Terre Haute, Indiana about the same time the talent included Johnny Welde with his bears, Alain Zerbini with his pigs and later with liberty ponies and llamas, Vladimir Rudenko on the high wire, the Zamperla unicycle act, the Flying Condors, Shane and Nicole Wright on the trampoline, and the Joe Frisco family with the elephants. Kimball Keller was ringmaster and Charles Schlarbaum had the band. Late in the year owner George Coronas sold his equipment and winter quarters to Tarzan Zerbini, for whom he reportedly was going to manage a second unit.

Wayne McCary produced the Shrine circus in Manchester, New Hampshire and about half a dozen Maine towns in April and May.

Talent making this swing included Andre Skarbecki with his lions, Derrick Rosaire with Tony the wonder horse, Rebecca Perez on the trapeze, David Maas and Dana Kaseeva in their quick change act, Kaseeva in a solo hula hoop routine, Koma Zurn in a top spinning act, and Bill Morris with the elephants. David Maas was ringmaster and Bob Carabia led the band. McCary spent most of the year as executive director of the big Eastern States Exposition in Springfield, Massachusetts, where, among his other duties, he contracted the Royal Hanneford Circus, thus making him both a purveyor and customer of sawdust services.

Paul Kaye's CircUSAmerica had only one date, but it was late November's killer Hadi Temple Circus in Evansville, Indiana. While only a four day engagement, the performance was the strongest of any Shrine program in North America, and a throw back to the glory days of Orrin Davenport and Polack Bros. The number of animal numbers was amazing. Among acts cashing pay checks in Evansville were Kay Rosaire with her cats, Johnny Peers with his dogs, Dick Kohlreiser with his dogs, Jeff Plunkett with his comedy car, the Murillo duo on the perch pole, balancer Wendy Bell, Dianne Wilson with her sea lions, Ari Steeple with his bears, Lee Stevens' with this baboons, Tavana Luvas in loop walking, the Boger family with their buf-faloes, the Flying Redpaths, the Castro brothers on the high wire, Derrick Rosaire with his wonder horse, Giovanni and Irene Anastasini with their aerial rocket car, the Jordans with their globe of death, and John Cuneo's fourteen elephants. Tommy Baker was ringmaster and Clement Toca was band leader.

Circuses were a common sight at fairs and festivals, usually as free attractions booked by carnivals or the fairs directly. With a few exceptions these were smaller affairs, usually one ringers giving about an hour's worth of entertainment either under a big top or in front of a grandstand. While a number of indoor producers pursued this brand of tanbark

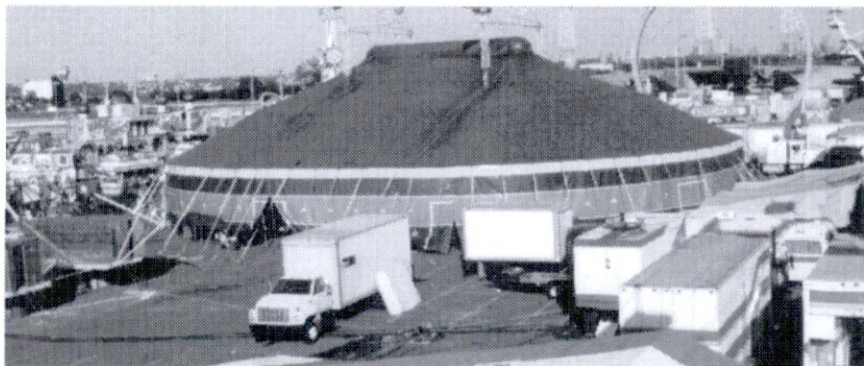


The Liebel Family Circus was one of the best known shows specializing in fair appearances. Fred D. Pfening, Jr. photo.

during the slack Shrine season in the summer, a few others specialized in this variant of the business.

The Liebel Family Circus worked from at least May until November in the Midwest and South, covering about 20,000 miles during the year. Playing mainly small fairs and festivals, the troupe used a tent seating about 1000. The performance included Carmen Valencia on web; Tony Liebel in hand balancing, on the high wire, on the rola bola, and with Nosey the elephant; Francesca Liebel with a big and little liberty horse act; Tony Liebel and Carmen Valencia in a juggling routine; and Felicity Florinate with a huge anaconda named Danielle. Owner Tommi Liebel presented a horse-riding monkey named Reggie, clowning, and ringmastered. Later in the season jugglers and rola bolaists Pat and Marita Davison joined. Tommi and wife Francesca Liebel had a son born on July 31 while the show was in Arcola, Illinois.

Joe Bauer's and George Coronas' Circus Maximus at the Meadowlands Fair in northern New Jersey in June and July. Paul C. Gutheil photo.



The Circo de Espectacular Garcia opened near Dallas in mid-February under a new big top holding about 1500. Dates in Fort Worth and Houston followed before fair dates in the Midwest and West in the late summer and fall. The Garcia family, headed by Jamie Garcia, put on most of the performance, including the flying trapeze, wheel of death, musical clowns, trampoline, juggling, web, and globe of death. The troupe also had two Chinese contortionists, Jimmy Hall with his bears and unicycle, his sister Carmen Hall with her baboons, and Bobby and Rosa Gibbs with the Donnie Johnson elephants on some dates. The Russell Bros. Family Fun Circus played about a dozen California fairs from February to October, moving on two trucks and two trailers. Owners Edward Russell and Stephen Michaels put on most of the under-canvas presentation. Russell's turns included trained birds and magic; Michaels', chair balancing, juggling and announcing. Joshua Smedly was the clown.

Dave and Judy Twomey's Happy-time Circus, in its 36th year, played a few Golden State midways. Swan Bros. Circus hurrahed at California, Oregon and Nevada fairs and festivals from March to September. Brothers Andy and Mike Swan, the proprietors, put on the entire pro-

gram beneath a tiny big top. Harvey and Bob Fuller produced the Guilford Fair Circus in Connecticut in September with Shane and Nicole Wright on the trampoline and on the comedy revolving ladder, Derrick Rosaire Jr. with his bears, Vladimir Rudenko on the high wire, Alexandra Burpee with dogs and horses, and Brett Bronson with his elephant Tanya. Mike Sayer was ringmaster.

Circus Sahara had May and June dates in Louisiana, and presumably elsewhere. Performers included owner Dorian Blake in his magic routine and Gordon and Vicki Howle with their dogs. Barry and Jan Yiangst's Magic Circus mesmerized audiences throughout the fair season with at least one engagement in Pennsylvania. The Yiangsts also toured the Indoor Circus Spectacular, a school show, through Tennessee and North Carolina in October. Inspiring crowds on this run were ringmaster Dorian Blake, the Esqueda family on teeter board and on unicycles, clowns Gigi and Tim Tegge, juggler Armando Cristiani, foot juggler Vickie Howle, and Bill Morris with his elephants.

Joe Bauer and George Coronas produced Circus Maximus at New Jersey's Meadowlands Fair in late June and early July with Ron and Joy Holiday's uncaged exotic cat act heading the bill. The King Arthur Circus appeared at September's Yorktown Heights, New York fair with Christina Dubsy with her poodles and birds, and chair balancer Shane Wright. Goldie Duchek was ringmistress. Owner Arthur Duchek also produced the Thrill Circus in Patterson, New Jersey during the summer with Brian Miser as the human cannonball. The Winn's Thrill Circus was at New York's Dutchess County Fair in August. The Carla Wallenda Thrill Circus presented mostly aerial numbers such as high wire and perch pole on midways.

Bill Carpenter had numerous units of his Backyard Circus at lots of fairs including the Ohio State in August. This one stressed crowd participation by recruiting children from the audience as performers. Dwight and Eric Damon's Circus Spectacular

appeared at New England fairs such as one in New Hampshire at which the program included juggler and unicyclist Ken Sherburne, clown John Dubsky, trampoliners Shane and Nicole Wright, wheel of deathers. Tony and Natasha Nock, and dog trainer Christina Dubsky. Mary Sarah O'Hanlon was the ringmistress. Pedro Morales' Stars and Spangles Circus, a one-ring tent, was at a West Virginia fair in August. Ecocircus combined environmental issues with the circus. Framed by Rev. Dr. James E. Lavender it showcased endangered predators. Whether it got beyond the conceptual stage and actually played fairs is unknown.

Petting zoos, whose origins went back to the great traveling menageries of the first half of the nineteenth century, were a fixture on fair grounds, offering a combination of exotic and barnyard animals from elephants and camels to sheep and goats. The largest of the genre was Commerford and Sons, headed by Bob Commerford, which had its Pet Zoo Expo on tour in buildings through the East from January to March. The big Meadowlands Fair in Northern New Jersey was among its midway dates. Commerford's animals included Dickie the giraffe, a Ringling-Barnum alumnus. Another big player was the Jim Phillips Petting Zoo which counted Milwaukee's Great Circus Parade and the Ohio State Fair among its stops. Others included Joe Hendrick's Petting Zoo which played the Southwest and Plains states, and Roxy Engesser's Petting Zoo which was in the Midwest.

Many field show performers, particularly ones with animals, worked as single attractions at fairs, which often paid more and provided better working conditions than circuses. John and Monica Welde had their bears at the Florida State Fair in Tampa in February. They were sponsored by the New York Yankees baseball team which accounted for the rolling globes being painted like baseballs and the bears wearing



Ward Hall's and Chris Christ's World of Wonders side show at New Jersey's Meadowlands Fair in June and July. Paul C. Gutheil photo.

Yankee uniforms. Other animals shows included Jeanette Rix's Big Bear Ranch, Donn J. Moyer's Reptile Safari, Heidi and James Riggs' Great Cats of the World, and Lee and Judy Stevens' Baboon Lagoon. The last, a beautifully framed operation, was a new entry which premiered at a North Carolina fair in May.

The side show lived on, but just barely, as only a handful of ten-in-one showmen continued to tour. All worked only fairs; no circus carried one. The doyen of this group was Ward Hall whose extravaganza appeared at a number of fairs including big ones at the Meadowlands and Tampa. Actually, the demand for the entertainment dispensed by side shows continued, but had morphed into a more bizarre, hip form which appealed to kids who followed rock and roll. While the human oddity had all but vanished, the often grotesque novelty acts which were also standard in kid shows, found a new home not on midways but in music clubs.

A flock of tiny, mostly one ring circuses performed in small, indoor venues. Most offered traditional fare and functioned as fund raising vehicles for small-time charities such as PTAs and veterans' groups which were unable to contract larger circuses.

Frequently selling their tickets over the telephone, these troupes were usually called "school shows" within the profession because of their proclivity to perform in school auditoriums and gyms. These aggregations usually marched during the first and last months of the year, in

step with the school schedule, and generally played limited routes in smaller towns. They were the descendants of the wagon shows of the late 19th century which plied their trade at county seats and crossroads towns.

The Royal Palace Circus was one of the most successful and established organizations of its kind.

Performing through the eastern half of the country from at least April to October, the neatly framed trick moved on two show-owned trucks. Among the talent was Irvin Hall with his comedy unicycle act and baboons, juggler Frank Galambos, Nellie Hanneford Poema in a lyre act and later with liberty horses, Michelle Chapman and Joanne Craig with two baby leopards, Coral Galambos in a hair hang, Donnie Noonan and Joseph Decker with snakes, and the Poema hand balancing trio. Brad Lee Pirkel was ringmaster and the music was on tape. A report at year's end that Harry Dubsky Sr., owner of the show, had purchased the rival Piccadilly Circus was apparently untrue.

The Piccadilly Circus, the cleverly named entry from Ian and Richard Garden, tramped around much of the United States, traveling on five trucks. Talent included Raoul Castano in a clown routine and with his dog, Gabriella Guzman on single trapeze, Eddie Steeples with Billy Joe the chimp, the Estrada family on the teeter board and later on the perch pole, and Sylvan Walker's birds. Senor Rai was ringmaster and performed illusions, a common combination of skills. At some dates, the company was called The White Tigers of Las Vegas. The top ticket for the Tiger show at a March New Jersey engagement was \$38.75, an extraordinary amount for a circus of this type.

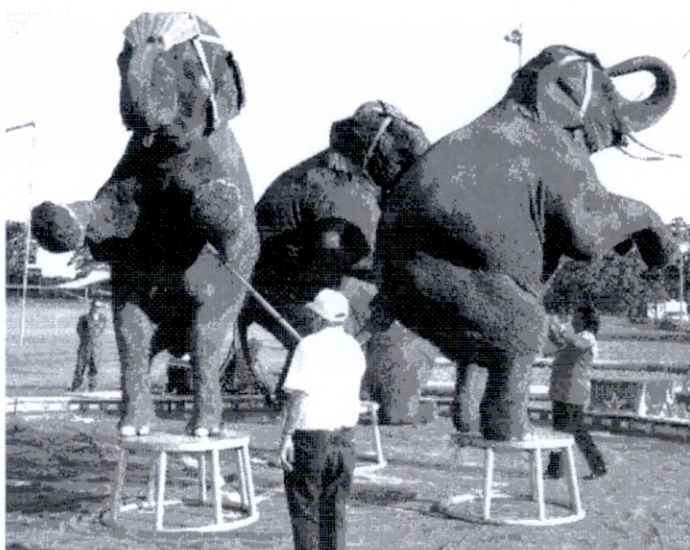
Circus Pages entertained audiences in at least the Midwest and South through October, moving on about four trucks. Displays included Frieda Pages on web, Yolanda Pages with long rein horses, the Logan sisters with liberty ponies, the Passo duo on the wire and in risley, and

James Earhart in juggling and poodle numbers. Manager Jorge Pages worked the cat act and the elephant. When the company played Richmond, Indiana in August, animal activists put "canceled" tags on posters to discourage attendance. For part of the season Fred Logan, former Beatty-Cole elephant boss, was on the show.

The Famous Cole Circus marched through the Midwest and upper South for about ten weeks in the spring and again near year's end. Acts on the spring tour included the Gauchos, hand balancer and foot juggler Pedro Morales, Paula Valencia on web, and the Valencias in juggling and cradle routines. Travis Green was ringmaster and illusionist. It was the thirteenth season for the show, owned by Ron and Willene Bacon and Larry and Cheryl Allmon.

The Royal American Circus frolicked in the South and Midwest from February to June, took July off, and resumed the ecstasy from August to November. Moving 50 to 100 miles each day, the troupe appeared in armories, gyms, and fairground exhibition buildings. At the season opener at Jackson, Mississippi in late February, the features were Dianne Wilson and her grandson D. V. Allen with seal lions, macaws, and Dachshunds; the Dykes family on unicycles; Robin and Ron Dykes in an aerial cradle; Lynn and Pepe Valencia in a riding routine, and later with liberty ponies; clown Paul Dean; and juggler Jose Torres. Owner Ray MacMahon was the announcer.

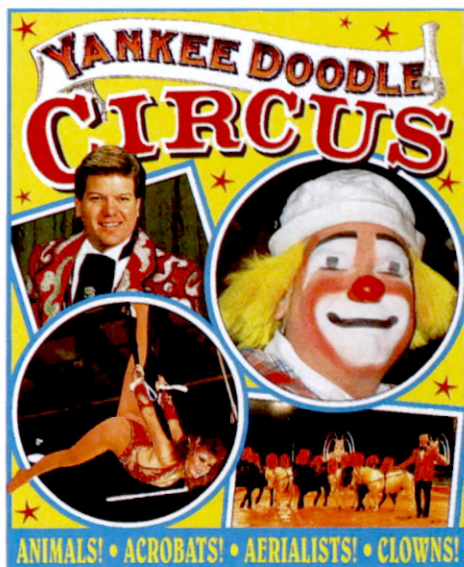
The American Family Circus had spring and fall runs in the South and East. Some of the dates were for promoter Mearl Johnson. Moving on five show-owned vehicles, the late-year edition featured Ruby Ramos on web, Roberto Torres on low wire, clown Ned "Skippy" Segle, the Ramos family in risley, Sara Miller with an uncaged black leopard, and hand balancer Arturo Ramos. Owner Stu Miller presented miniature liberty horses and illusions. Jose Cole's International Circus rumbled from



For the first time in years, Fred Logan wasn't on Beatty-Cole. He is shown here working the George Carden herd at Portage, Wisconsin on June 9. Logan also was with Circus Pages. Tim Tegge photo.

March to June in the upper Midwest. Among the in-ring personnel were Tom Demry with Anna Louise the elephant and later with a long rein horse, Traci Bannister on web and aerial lyre, clown Elmo Gibb, Ken Taylor in a cloud swing and later foot juggling, and the Bannister family with their dogs. Announcer Pat Davison also juggled and rola bolaed.

Poster for Mike Naughton's Yankee Doodle Circus, a school show. Bill Biggerstaff collection.



In its 21st year, the company was one of the longest-lived shows of its type.

Billy Martin's All Star Circus appeared in western New York armories and gyms early and late in the year. Among the talent in March was Joanne Wilson with her poodles and birds, and Angela Martin on trapeze. During the summer, owner Martin performed at a Pennsylvania amusement park for Tommy Hanneford. He

also had three New England stands, one of them a fair, on his own under the former Hendricks Bros. big top. Clown Kevin Ryan; foot juggler Kim Sue; the Vallas in an aerial cradle routine; Debbie and Emil Goetschi in a western act, tight wire, plate spinning and juggling; Joanne Wilson with her dogs and birds; and trapezeist Angela Martin worked the late summer dates.

The Yankee Doodle Circus toured the Northeast from February to May. Among the arenic talent in the hour and a half production were Anneli Cristiani on the single trapeze, the Darnells with their magic and dog acts, clowns Chris Bayher and Linda Hulett, Armando Cristiani on the trampoline, and eleven year old Tamir Erdenechimeg in unicycle, juggling and hand balancing routines. Owner Mike Naughton was ringmaster, and a two person band backed the performance.

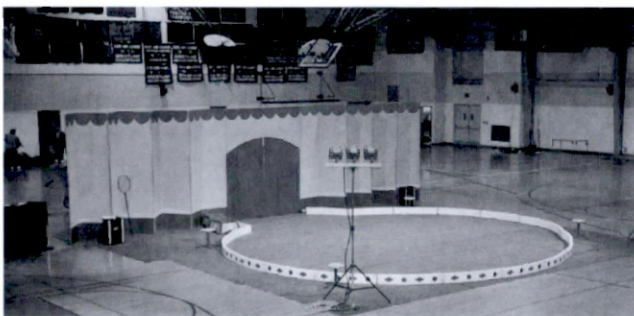
The Wonderland Circus awed audiences in Georgia and South Carolina for about four weeks at the first of the year. Entertaining the towners were the Rolling Diamonds in their roller skating routine, cloud swinger Janet Munoz, clowns John Murphy and Mike Ellis, and owner Bill Brickle with his poodles. Brickle was also ringmaster.

Cathy Rogers had a number of mini-routes in the Midwest, Texas, and doubtless elsewhere throughout the year with generic titles such as Children's Variety Show, Marvelous Mystics on Parade, and the always

popular if unoriginal Santa's Christmas Show. When the Marvelous Mystics were in Cincinnati in late May or early June, the actors were juggler and plate spinner Dave Henley, clown Victor Phillips, and the Fantasy Flyers in an acrobatic routine. The Queen City engagement was under the auspices of a group called the Vietnam Veterans of America, a typical sponsor for this brand of the business.

The Olde Tyme Circus, owned by Ron Morris whose day job was printing show posters, was in New England during the spring. The roster included the Dunderdales in knock about comedy and rola bola routines. Floyd Bradbury, who had as many years experience on school shows as anyone in the universe, was the ringmaster, magician and road manager. Morris was also involved in something called Popeye's Magic Circus which reportedly opened a Japanese tour on March 21 with acts from the Pickle Family Circus and managed by Chester Cable and Wini McKay. The show featured characters from the Popeye comic strip. A second unit supposedly opened in Canada in April, booked by the great Bill English, and managed by Mike Straka and Roberta Sheriden. The Jenny Wallenda Circus made Eastern dates from March to June and from October to November. When the company played a National Guard Armory on Long Island in late May, Benny Fornasari clowned, David and Susie Lang juggled, Louis Tabak had a four pony drill, Bela Tabak had snakes and later liberty llamas, and Venicio Vasquez hand balanced and trapezed. Brett Webb was ringmaster and performed magic. Jim Nordmark and Floyd Bradbury owned the show during the spring tour; Nordmark was out of the fall tour leaving Bradbury sole owner. Jenny Wallenda was listed as producer.

The Hungarian Family Circus was a new show which appeared in mid-January near Tampa and presumably elsewhere. Talent included Pomas family in risley and foot juggling numbers, and the Dunderdales



Ron Morris had his Old Tyme Family Circus on the East Coast for about three weeks in the spring. Photo shows the lay out in a school gym in Attleboro, Massachusetts. The equipment was owned by show manager Floyd Bradbury Tim Tegge photo.

in juggling and comedy knock about acts. Owner Janos Dubsy clowned and wife Christina presented poodles. Tom Tomashek was reported to have an indoor show on the road in early December, although there was no confirmation. The Family Showcase Theater, sometimes called the All Star Magic Review, was in the Midwest and Border states. Owned by the Reynolds family, the company was headed by Dan Reynolds.

Atlantic Southern Productions was scheduled to open on March 31 with Shane and Nicole Wright in revolving ladder and trampoline routines,

Dick and Ian Garden called their Piccadilly Circus the White Tigers of Las Vegas at some towns, including this one in New Jersey. Al House collection.



clown Tom Lyons, and comedy pick pocket (now there's an oxymoron) Ricky Dunn. Show manager Bob Kenney also performed magic. No evidence of an actual performance surfaced.

Jeddie's Magic Circus, the Popinpooh Circus, and the Peanut Circus were all apparently one man bands that played schools and were therefore marginal to this account.

Circuses and circus acts were much in evidence at amusement and theme parks, resort areas, and Flea Markets. Baraboo, Wisconsin's Circus World Museum had its usual strong line up with David Dimitri in riding and low wire acts, juggler Octavio Alegria, aerialists Gheorghe and Luisa Marinof, Jorge and Lou Ann Barreda with their elephants, and clowns Bill Machtel, Phillip and clowns Bill Machtel, Phillip Semon, and Toby Lawrence. David SaLoutos was ringmaster and Rick Percy led the band. Jimmy "Happy the Clown" Williams was not on the program for the first time in decades. The Great Circus Parade in Milwaukee, which showcased the Museum's unmatched wagon collection, was its usual roaring success. Not long after the July parade, Ben Barkin, the parade's volunteer chairman and head fund raiser, retired.

Peru, Indiana's International Circus Hall of Fame opened its doors from late June to early September. Among the attractions were steam calliope concerts by Dave Morecraft, and Larry allen Dean with a tiger training demonstration. The big top show starred clowns Bob Hurley and Pat Kelly, Julius Von Uhl with an African elephant, Nourbol and Almas Meirmanov in perch pole and hand balancing routines, and Melonie Slonaker in an aerial number. John Fugate was ringmaster. George and Vicky Hanneford produced the circus at Fort Lauderdale's Thunderbird Swap Shop starting around Thanksgiving with clown Santiago Rodriguez, trick bicyclist Johnny Castang, trick roper Joel Faulk, the Marinofs on the trapeze, and Cathy Hanneford with elephants. George Hanneford III was ringmaster.

Circus acts were popular at main-

stream summer parks, particularly in the East. Enchanted Forest in Old Forest, New York employed Mike and Deborah Winn with their aerial motorcycle and wheel of death, and Brunon Blaszk with his tigers. The Catskill Game Farm in Catskill, New York had John Welde with his bears and Franklin Murray with his elephants. Great Escape in Lake George, New York was the summer home for Jim Hall with his bears, Erik Adams with his dogs, the Flying Cortez, and the Urias troupe with their globe of death. Kay Rosaire and her big cats summered at a New Jersey amusement park. Another Garden State park had Cirque de Macabre in October with Roberta Winn in a slide for life, fire eater Santani Demon, and Christine Zerbini and Nickolas Winn in the wheel of death. Bill Warriner was announcer. The Southwick Zoo in Massachusetts presented Carmen Hall with her baboons, Lisa Dufresne with her miniature liberty horses, and Brett Bronson with his two African elephants.

The spot date, the creation of a circus for a very short time, often only one or two performances, was an under-documented segment of the industry. Doubtless, some of these circuses were produced by established managers using different titles or without explicit connection. While these ventures were not a significant part of the sawdust landscape, a few were major undertakings. All exemplified the remarkably fluid nature of the business as these operas were literally here today and gone tomorrow.

Frank Curry's big-time Ronald McDonald Circus drew over 67,000 people in Nashville from January 30 to February 2. Inside the ring curb appeared Jack Cook with his comedy car, Trevor Boswell with his aerial butterfly act, the Riders of the Night Cossack troupe, Delilah Wallenda on the high wire, Les Kimes with his pigs, the Urias family with their globe of death, the Cavallini teeter board act, Othmar Vohringer with the Cuneo white tigers, human cannonball Dave Smith Jr., and the Bill Morris and Jorge and Lou Ann Barreda elephants.

The World's Largest Free Circus in

Detroit on June 14-15 was another major spot date. Produced by Jeanette Williams, the performance featured Derrick Rosaire Jr. with his bears, Phil and Francine Schacht with their elephant Dondi, and human cannonballer Atos Zamperla. Zamperla suffered numerous fractures when he bounced off the air mattress and hit the concrete at the end of a shoot. Bill Birchfield put on the Children's Circus for the Jaycees in Kissimmee, Florida in early February, contracting Kay Rosaire with her cats, the Rosaire-Zoppe chimps, Gary Noel with his dogs and later in plate spinning, juggler and unicyclist T. J. Howell, the Flying Wallendas on the high wire, and Sasha Pavlata and Aurelia Wallenda in a double cloud swing.

The majority of spot dates were lesser affairs. La Cirque Bohemia was at a Connecticut college in June with juggler, unicyclist and rolling globler Ken Sherburne; acrobats Karen Gersch and Fran Sperling; the Burdeskys in contortion, juggling and hula hoop routines; Oleg Inov on the slack wire; Amanda Topaz on trapeze; juggler George Orosz; and clown Mike Maroney. The two hour show was produced by Bob Fuller who put together a circus at a nearby fair later in the year. The Colony Beach Resort Circus in Sarasota on November 29 featured the Flying Wallendas.

Circus von Amberg, known as "un Spectacle Exotique" appeared in a New Orleans Theater in late September. It was said to be its 30th anniversary edition, and presumably had nothing to do with the American Circus Corporation, the last organization to use the title. The Santa Claus Circus, owned by Peter Sturgis, played his home town of Baraboo, Wisconsin on December 6, and nearby Sauk Prairie the next day.

Even more obscure, if possible,

were shows that gave off only a faint glimmer of their existence, rather like the radio waves from stars in deep space. Among these troupes were the Golden Dragon Acrobats which was in Pasadena, California in late February; the Care Circus in Glendora, California in June; and the Circus of Circles in Sausalito, California in late January. Whether these juggernauts had further engagements was unknown. One show that never got beyond the letterhead stage was the Circus

Maximus which was going to be a three ringer in Roanoke, Virginia in September. Its ads looked like it was the size of Hagenbeck-Wallace, so extensive was the call list.

Free child's ticket for Peter Sturgis' Santa Claus Circus at Baraboo, Wisconsin on December 6. Karen Severson collection.

The amateur youth circus flourished, providing fun and teaching entry level skills to children and adolescents. The circus school

in Montreal, once the farm team for Cirque du Soleil, was the only one on the continent to offer training that approached the level of the great European schools. Because of the lack of other institutions of higher learning, youth circuses took on increased importance. A remarkable number of professionals first tanbark memories were of a kid show or camp.


Sarasota High School's Sailor Circus, headed by Julie Snyder, put on a number of exhibitions under its permanent tent, including one during the Circus Festival early in the year. The Wenatchee Youth Circus, named after the troupe's hometown in Washington, was another long-timer in punk show biz. Headed by Paul Pugh, it open aired it during summer weekends in Washington and Oregon. The single ring perform-

FREE TICKET

Regular Child Admission \$5.50
(14 yrs. & under)

All children must have ticket. Up to 2 children
accompanied by paid adult admission.

SANTA CLAUS



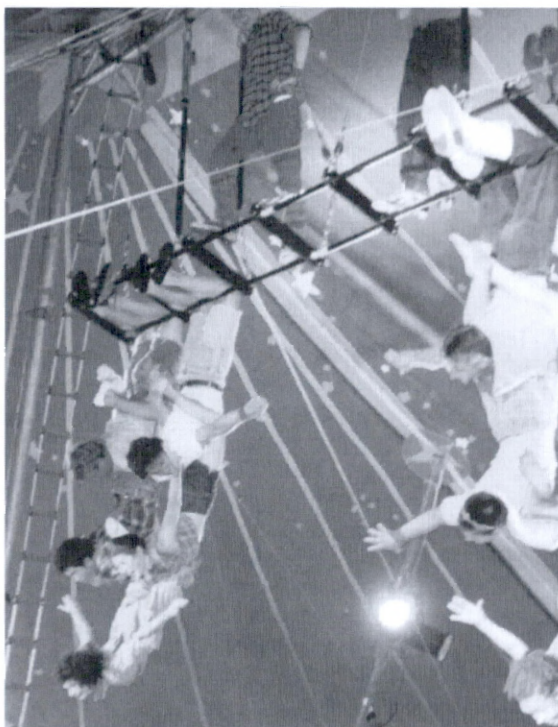
CIRCUS

CONCESSIONS AVAILABLE
NO OUTSIDE FOOD OR DRINKS ALLOWED

ance featured children between the ages of five and nineteen who juggled, trapezed, trampolined, high wired, and teeter boarded. A third venerable juvenile show was Peru, Indiana's Circus City Festival Circus which had its 38th season in July with in-ring talent between the ages of seven and twenty-one, and a 55 person band. Five girls and two boys accomplished an amazing feat when they completed a seven person pyramid on the high wire during performances. Garfield, the comic strip cat whose creator grew up near Peru, was the grand marshal of the annual Festival parade.

Florida State University's Flying High Circus celebrated its 50th anniversary with appearances on campus in Tallahassee in April and at Callaway Gardens during the summer. The Great All American Youth Circus at Redlands, California was part of the local YMCA program as it had been since 1929. The Gamma Phi Circus at Illinois State University in Normal hurrahed in April with 75 students. Directed by Jerry Polacek, it was the oldest college circus, having started in 1932. Circus Tigray, a children's show from Ethiopia, appeared in Washington, D. C. in September with talent from seven to twenty in displays of acrobatics, contortion, balancing and other sawdust skills.

Children from ten to eighteen learned circus arts at Circus Smirkus, a camp founded by Rob Mermin in Greensboro, Vermont. After training, the show went on the road, giving exhibitions in New England towns. The performers displayed a variety of skills such as juggling, clowning, trapeze, and low wire under a single ring big top. The Berkshire Kids Circus, another camp, enjoyed its 4th year in Pittsfield, Massachusetts in August. At session's end, the 56 scholars, aged eight to thirteen, had learned basic routines including wire walking, web, rolling globe, and clowning. The husband and wife team of Michael Killian and Jessica Hentoff headed the camp, and Jens Larson was artistic director. The Fern Street Circus, headed by Circus Flora alumnus John Highkin, was an after-



Aerial number by the talented kids of Circus Smirkus, Rob Mermin's Vermont circus camp. Robert Sugarman photo.

school circus arts program in San Diego. Members of the Tino Wallenda-Zoppe family were coaches and guest artists.

The Showfolks of Sarasota Circus, which benefited the local showfolks club, was held on December 13 with all-volunteer features. The program included Ken Benson with Lula Belle the mule, Raul Segura in an inclined motorcycle, the Moroccan Connection in a tumbling routine, and producer Jorge Pages with his cats. James Earhart was ringmaster. This was the year of two Sarasota Circus Festivals, one in January, another in December. Both were poorly attended.

Many tanbark artists earned part of their living at sport shows, ice shows, trade shows, dinner theaters, renaissance faires, cruise ships and other venues using variety entertainment. Juggler T. J. Howell and dog trainer Bobby Moore both worked at the Osmond Family Theater in Branson, Missouri. The Tommy Bartlett water skiing attraction at Wisconsin Dells featured juggler Dieter Tasso and the Nerveless Nocks on sway poles. Well known cir-

cus acts such as elephant trainer Bones Craig and clown John Lepiarz aka Fish from Big Apple earned paychecks at Renaissance Faires. Cirque Le Masque put on shows for corporations. Produced by Dennis Schussel, the 80 minute performance featured such standard fare as trapeze, juggling and teeter board.

Casinos provided many showfolks with jobs, so many in fact that Las Vegas had a large circus community. Circus Circus Casino on the strip employed more spangled talent than most small tenters. Juggler Wally Eastwood, who appeared in the Splash show at the Riviera Hotel, was among the scores of circus performers working in other Vegas hotels. The Reno Hilton featured the Flying Cranes, the Fausto Scorpions, and trampolin-

er Bob Bolean. The Tropicana Hotel in Atlantic City provided work for the Urias family in the globe of death, human cannonball Brian Miser, and comedy trampolinist Don Otto. Even the Indian casinos hired circus acts. One in Connecticut, for example, presented the Peking Acrobats.

At least three wild west shows, the first cousin of the circus, toured. The Great American Wild West Show appeared at fairs. Tom Bishop's 4-B Ranch Wild West stunned audiences at a Lake George, New York amusement park through the summer. The Pawnee Bill Wild West thrilled crowds in Fort Worth in August. All featured such time-honored western routines as trick roping, trick riding, knife throwing and whip cracking. In other western news, a group of letters to Gordon Lillie, aka Pawnee Bill, including many from Buffalo Bill, were auctioned in Austin, Texas in April. A Native American who died on the Buffalo Bill Show in London in 1892 was returned to his ancestral burial grounds at Wounded Knee, South Dakota.

The Clown Hall of Fame had its official opening in Milwaukee in April, and inducted the European comedy duo of George Footit and Chocolat. Sarasota's Ring of Fame immortalized midget rider Francesco Rizzi aka Cucciolo, the Flying

Gaonas, the multi-talented Rosaire family, and the elephant-training Woodcock family. Peru's Circus Hall of Fame took in bear trainer Albert Rix, elephant trainer Robert "Smokey" Jones, the Knie family and Jerome Medrano, the latter two European show owners. The Ringling Museum honored juggler Dieter Tasso as the Sarasota Circus Celebrity of the year.

The Monte Carlo Circus Festival, held early in the year, included far more Americans, or performers who worked regularly in North America, than in past years. They were Masha Dimitri, Sylvia Zerbini, Octavio Alegria, Sabu, Johnny Peers, and Richard Chipperfield. Where are They Now Department: Patricia White presented a Clubb-Chipperfield mixed exotic cat act on the Austrian National Circus; Patty Zerbini was elephant boss on Germany's Circus Krone; and Trudy Strong worked the cats on Krone.

Australia put May Wirth and Con Colleano, both of whom achieved stardom in the United States, on postage stamps as part of a series celebrating 150 years of circus in that country. Billy Rose's great play *Jumbo* was revived at a Sacramento theater in October. The film *Buddy* was a critical and box office flop, as it well deserved to be. Purported to be the story of Gargantua before he joined the circus, the film makers, capitulating to political correctness, changed the ending by having Buddy go to the Philadelphia Zoo rather than Ringling-Barnum when he became too difficult to handle. Another failure was a Broadway musical inspired by the lives of Daisy and Violet Hilton, the famous Texas Siamese twins.

A few shows erased the line between circus and theater. Two clown college graduates put on the *Midnight Circus* in a Chicago theater in the spring. Jay Alexander melded vaudeville and circus in the *New Swing Circus* at a San Francisco theater in March and April. Circus Soozee, a one woman show that includ-



Horse trainer Nellie Hanneford Poema on the Royal Palace Circus in Sussex, New Jersey. Paul C. Gutheil photo.

ed circus routines, appeared in Oakland libraries throughout the summer. Soozee Shireman was the chief cook and bottle washer. The novel spelling of her given name begged the timeless question of why some people think it's cute to spell a perfectly good name in an aberrant manner.

Sign that the Apocalypse is Upon Us Department: The Jim Rose Circus Side Show, that mutation of a circus featuring maggot eating and lesbian sumo wrestling, not only was main-

Johnny Peers and Peggy O'Neil had one of the most popular dog acts in the business. They are shown here on Big Apple in Great Barrington, Massachusetts during the summer. Robert Sugarman photo.



stream entertainment to the younger set, but spawned imitators such as the Tokyo Shock Boys, and the Bindlestiff Family Cirkus and Autonomedia Bookmobile, both of which presented similarly gross antics. The Bottom Feeder Award went to Scott Baker who had a one-man freak show in Baltimore late in the year. Ominously called *Geek Circus*, we couldn't bring ourselves to ask what he did.

Felix Adler Days was held in Clinton, Iowa in June. Vincent A. Pagliano produced *Clownfest* in New Jersey in September. Among the performers was Bill Irwin, the best American clown of the last twenty years. The seventh annual *Clown Roundup* was held at Tombstone, Arizona in November. One hopes the clowns didn't lose too much weight on the way to their butchering. Surf's Up Department: the number of circus-related sites on the Internet continued to grow. *Cirque du Soleil's* excellent offering was the winner of the Shannon Woodcock Award for best circus-related web site.

The Museum of the City of New York commemorated that city's rich circus heritage in the fall and winter. Dominique Jando, the Big Apple Circus' associate creative director and resident historian, was a consultant. The Ringling Museum had an exhibition "John Ringling: Dreamer—Builder—Collector" about his art collection and the building of his museum. A treasure hunter announced he would attempt to raise John Ringling's yacht which went down off Sarasota in 1930. Former elephant owner Bobby Moore was charged with four felony counts related to a suspicious fire at his steak house near Detroit in September.

Book Watch Department: This was an excellent year for circus books, particularly those dealing with show history. Volumes on Buffalo Bill collectibles, Modoc the elephant,

Circus Smirkus, dime museums, P. T. Barnum, and Civil War circuses were all welcome and worthy additions to bookshelves. In spite of being in German, a history of American circus and zoo elephants was required reading for pachyderm aficionados. Jack Bennett's memoirs, a raucous and often hilarious account of high grass trouping, was a sleeper hit. Clown Gigi Tegge published a children's book, no mean feat; and Ernest Albrecht debuted *Spectacle*, a highbrow magazine on the artistry of the circus. Even the coloring books were good as Big Apple Circus and Dover Books came out with the best ever published. Stuart Thayer's *Traveling Showmen*, an analysis of the business side of the American circus from 1825 to 1860, was the icing on the cake. Arguably the finest monograph on show history ever written, it was the unanimous winner of the coveted Antony Hippisley Coxe Award for the year's best circus book. No route books were published for the first time in years, the only down note in a remarkably rich season for circus literature.

Many fine members of the circus community passed away in 1997. Among them: Bob Bell, Chicago's Bozo for 25 years and a member of the Clown Hall of Fame; Connie Clausen, former Ringling-Barnum show broad and writer; Jerry Collins, former owner of Beatty-Cole; Elizabeth Christy, widow of 1920s showman George W. Christy; Russell Darr, musician; Wayne Franzen, showman; Annie Fratellini, legendary clown, teacher and inspiration; Harold "Tuffy" Genders, flyer and Ringling-Barnum executive; Aurelia Hall, long-time showperson; Bill Hamilton, clown; John Hartzell, Jr., flyer; Robert L. Hasson, old-time side show manager with Ringling-Barnum; Dorita Konyot Humphreys, rider in family act; Vittorio Mangiavacchi, old-time Zacchini cannonballer; Dan Mannix, outdoor show business writer; Lora Ann "Dinky" Patterson, aerialist; Al Pilz, concessionaire; Baron Richard Paul Nowak, Wallace Bros. midget in



Sylvia Zerbin's aerial and horse acts were enormously popular. She is shown here at the Royal Hanneford Circus at the Eastern States Exposition in September. Dan McGinnis, Sr. photo.

1930s; Helena Ostrowsak aka Elly Ardelty, former Ringling-Barnum aerial star; Trolle Rhodin, former Ringling-Barnum talent scout;

"Under the Big Top" was an exhibition at the Museum of The City of New York on the history of circuses in New York from Ricketts to Big Apple. Paul C. Gutheil photo.



Frank Saltzgiver, long-time Toledo, Ohio Shrine circus chairman; Wayne A. Smithey II, member of N/Motion, the 1992 Ringling-Barnum rock group; Jimmy Stewart, star of movie *Greatest Show on Earth*; Connie Wilson, retired trouper; Ingeborg Woods, performer and producer.

This account benefited immensely from the barage of documentation I received from strangers and friends. This overview's merits are in large measure the result of their kindness in sharing information. Its deficiencies are mine alone. Those making this year's honor roll are: Ernest Albrecht, R. Matt Bourque, Bill Biggerstaff, Joe Bradbury, Eric Braun, Arnold Brito, Paul Butler, Pete Cash, Herb Clement, James S. Cole, Don Covington, Cam Cridlebaugh, Fred Dahlinger, Chuck Druding, Bill Elbirn, Bruce Fowler, Bobby Gibbs, Paul Gutheil, John Goodall, Burt Harwood, Sally Harwood, Al House, Sheelagh Jones, Ken Kawata, Miles McCarry, Edward P. Meals, Ron Morris, Gerald Nicholls, Greg Parkinson, Fred Pfening, Jr., Sandy Pfening, John Polacek, Scott Pyles, Joe Rettinger, Richard J. Reynolds III, William Rhodes, Mary Rower, Karen Severson, Mike Sporrer, J. Kurt Spence, Peter Sturgis, Robert Sugarman, Gordon Taylor, Gigi Tegge, Tim Tegge, and William Woodcock.

One could no more write about the contemporary circus without *Circus Report*, ably edited by Don Marcks, than a Civil War historian could write about that conflagration without the *Official Record of the Rebellion*. I would particularly like to acknowledge Bob Stoddard, the Boswell of the big top, for his superb coverage of shows and show people in *CR*. His stories were always full of information and pleasing to read. *Amusement Business*, *Back Yard*, *White Tops*, and *Showfolks of Sarasota Newsletter* were also useful, as were scores of cuttings from newspapers.

RINGLINGVILLE HORSE BARN

BARABOO, WISCONSIN

By Sherry L. Huhn

The following paper represents the preliminary research compiled on the 1901 Ring Barn and 1904 Baggage Horse Barn, once part of the Ringling Bros. Circus Winter Quarters in Baraboo, Wisconsin. These two Ringling Bros. properties, along with six others, are owned by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin and operated by the Circus World Museum. The site, historically known as Ringlingville, is designated a National Historic Landmark. Additional information about the Ring and Baggage Horse Barns' appearance and use will undoubtedly be uncovered as part of the Museum's overall goal to restore and interpret Ringlingville. Excerpts from this paper were presented at the 1996 Circus Historical Society Convention in Baraboo. Sherry Huhn until recently was the Curator of Artifacts at Circus World Museum.

In 1884, five Ringling brothers—Al, Charles, Aft T., Otto and John—launched their circus careers with the establishment of the Yankee Robinson and Ringling Bros. Great Double Shows. The circus prospered, enabling the Ringlings to purchase two of their competitors, Forepaugh-Sells in 1906 and Barnum & Bailey in 1907. Each winter the brothers returned to Baraboo, Wisconsin to regroup and expand the Ringling Bros. World's Greatest Show. Along with them came scores of railroad cars and wagons, performers and trainers and an assortment of animals, both wild and tamed.

Like other railroad circuses of its time, Ringling Bros. probably owned more horses than any other animal in its show. In addition to ring horses, which performed in the big top, the Ringlings used

large numbers of baggage or draft stock to move the circus. Baggage horses primarily worked behind the scenes, pulling wagons from the railroad yards to the circus lot and back, erecting the big top and a multitude of other duties.

The number of ring and baggage horses owned by the Ringlings varied, typically increasing as the circus expanded. Ringling Bros. owned 60 horses and ponies in 1887, 80 in 1888, 107 in 1890, 130 in 1891, and 207 in 1893.¹ By 1902, the number had risen to 362 horses, all of which required shelter at winter quarters.² To house the ever increasing number of horses, the Ringlings owned numerous barns in Baraboo both in Ringlingville, their quarters on Water Street, and at their farm on Lynn Avenue.

Ringling Horses

Circus spectators frequently judged the quality of a show by the quality of horses that the circus owned. As a result, the physical appearance and breed of an animal proved as important as its ability to perform or work. In 1903, the Ringlings listed the following breeds as part of their head of 600 horses: "from the most diminutive Shetland ponies to the largest Normans [Percherons] and Clydes[dales], together with the

Ringling Bros. Circus departing Baraboo in 1918. Corner of Ash and Water Streets. All illustrations from the the Circus World Museum.

many intermediate grades, such as the Arabian, English, Kentuckians, American trotting, Mexican, and other breeds."³ Most of the baggage horses though were Percherons, primarily gray in color.

In 1909, Otto Ringling detailed his preference for draft stock in a letter to William P. Hall, a dealer in circus horses. "Regarding baggage horses, will be pleased to patronize you if you can furnish the quality at the right price. We want heavy boned, short coupled chunks, to weigh not less than 1500 pounds up to 1700 or 1800 pounds, dark grays or dapples. They must be the right pattern and sound."⁴ A story published by *The Breeder's Gazette* in 1911 provides additional insight on the baggage horses used by the Ringlings. "The three great historic circuses now owned by the Ringling Bros. are handled when off the railroad cars by gray draft horses. The drafters make up a large numerical proportion of the 1,600 horses used altogether in connection with these three shows." The author continued, "The shrewd business calculations of the show managers have settled upon dapple gray as the most impressive color."⁵ The *Sauk County Democrat* also commented on the Ringlings' preference for gray: "Ringling Bros. have received a car-load of horses from Chicago to be used as draught horses. They are of iron gray color and will make good mates for those already used in the show business."⁶

The price of ring and baggage stock varied depending on the quality of the animal and market supply and demand. The *Billboard* reported in 1901 that draft horses ranged in price from \$110 to \$140.⁷ Around that same time, the Ringlings



placed an insurance value of \$200 a head on their ring stock and \$75 a head on their baggage stock. These values, however, may not represent the actual cost of replacing the animals. In 1913, more than a decade later, the Ringlings paid \$175 a head for eight horses, probably baggage stock, and \$300 a head for twelve horses, probably ring stock.⁸

The Ringlings purchased horses over the winter, buying enough to outfit their show for the next season. In 1909, Otto Ringling informed Hall that "Regarding baggage horses, we will require a great many, enough to fill out Ringling Brothers, Barnum & Bailey and to equip Forepaugh-Sells. . . . I think a trip to Baraboo next February would pay you."⁹ Hall served as a major supplier of ring and baggage stock to the Ringlings, but they acquired horses from other sources as well. Abe Klee & Sons advertised in the Ringling Bros. Circus 1906 program, "We respectfully call your attention to all the horses used by Ringling Brothers in their immense shows. Have just completed our contract which called for the equipment of 500 head of horses to be used by them for this season."¹⁰ The Ringlings also advertised locally for draft stock in the *Baraboo Republic*: "Ringling Bros. want to buy 25 head of horses. Must be good stock weighing from 1000 lbs. upward to 1600."¹¹ Rather than use a single dealer, the Ringlings probably purchased horses from the dealer with the highest quality of horses available at the best price.

Over the winter months, the Ringlings disposed of those horses that could no longer keep up with the arduous demands of circus life. Baggage and ring stock that had outlived their usefulness may have occasionally become food for the carnivorous animals with the show. An advertisement placed in the *Baraboo Weekly News* affirms that the Ringlings fed their animals horse meat: "WANTED To Buy Old Useless HORSES In Good Health to be Used



East end of Ringlingville on the site of the current Feld Exhibit Hall and Visitor Center, 1907-1918.

for Animal Food. Apply to Charles Smith Ringling Bros.' Winter Quarters Baraboo, Wisconsin."¹²

Rather than use their old baggage and ring horses for animal food, the Ringlings more likely sold or traded most of the horses to dealers, provided that they were still capable of working. In 1907, the Ringlings wrote Hall: "For your information, we would state that a number of horse-men are expected . . . to bid on this surplus stock. In case it is not all sold, all surplus stock from both shows [Ringling Bros. and Forepaugh-Sells] will go to Baraboo, Wisconsin, and we will advise you as to what remains in Baraboo. Think perhaps it would be to your advantage to arrange to meet both shows on the road."¹³ Otto Ringling reported to Hall in 1909 that "Regarding the old horses we have to dispose of, will say, we close at Okolona, Miss., Nov. 20th and I will let you know in ample time how many horses we will have to sell. . . . I will be pleased to consider your bid."¹⁴

Long after trucks superseded horses in most other industries, circuses continued to rely on horsepower. In 1918, when questioned about the ongoing use of horses, a spokesperson for the Ringling organization responded, "The old horse and wagon has been entirely too faithful to be discarded. What would the circus mean to the kids without the long lines of horses pulling the creaking wagons in the early morning light?

The smell of gasoline would rob the circus of all romance."¹⁵ The Ringlings continued to utilize baggage horses until the early 1940s, at which time the gasoline engine finally won out.

Winter Quarters Activities in Baraboo

The Ringling Bros. Circus usually completed its traveling season in October or November and then

returned to winter quarters in Baraboo. With hundreds of horses and other animals to feed and stable, the Ringlings had to ship in large quantities of baled hay each winter. According to the *Baraboo Weekly News*, hay cost \$10 per ton in 1913, double the price from the previous year.¹⁶ A year later, the newspaper reported on the arrival of the Ringlings' shipment of hay, claiming that "It takes about 55,000 tons to winter their circus animals."¹⁷

An insurance certificate from circa 1898 lists six structures, four of them on Water Street, as stables for the Ringlings' 187 baggage and 95 ring horses. Based on this document, it is evident that the Ringlings housed their baggage and ring horses in separate facilities. Two frame, shingle-roof barns on Water Street housed the baggage stock, with 51 horses in one structure and 44 in the other. Another two barns, thought to have been located at the Lynn Avenue farm, contained the remainder of the baggage stock. The larger building, two-stories in height and with a stone basement, reportedly contained 70 baggage horses, whereas the smaller, one-story barn housed 22.¹⁸ The Ringlings stabled the ring horses on Water Street in close proximity to the practicing rings. Two barns stabled the ring stock, with 35 in a 1 1/2 story frame structure and 60 horses in the "Practicing Rink." The ring contained a mechanic, a safety device that prevented riders from falling while practicing their acts. After 1901, horses and other animal acts could be trained in an

outside ring behind the Elephant House, west of the new Ring Barn.

One reporter who visited winter quarters commented, "The riding stock is kept in splendid condition. The Hodgins and others practice here every day in the ring barn and will have some novel surprises to offer when the season starts."¹⁹ M. B. Raymond, an agent for the Ringling Bros. Circus, explained how the public could observe these sessions. "By asking at the office you are provided with a pass and a guide (oh yes it is free to all) and if you are fortunate enough to attend on visitor's day you have a treat that can be obtained nowhere else. A visit to the Ring Barn and training quarters. Every other day for hours at a time, you can find riders here practicing new feats of horsemanship, each trying to excel his neighbor."²⁰ Of course not all horse acts involved riders. Ring stock also performed in liberty horse acts, free of riders, reins or harness, and directed solely by visual or verbal commands.

For many of the baggage horses, winter was a period of leisure. After having their shoes removed, they went to pasture at the Lynn Avenue farm or on Water Street. A 1914 article in the *Billboard* stated that "Over 500 head of horses are quartered here and at the farm, and the ani-

mals seem to be enjoying their winter's rest. On bright days they are let out in the big lots, and though they are rough and shaggy now, they will be clipped, cleaned, and groomed before the show starts."²¹

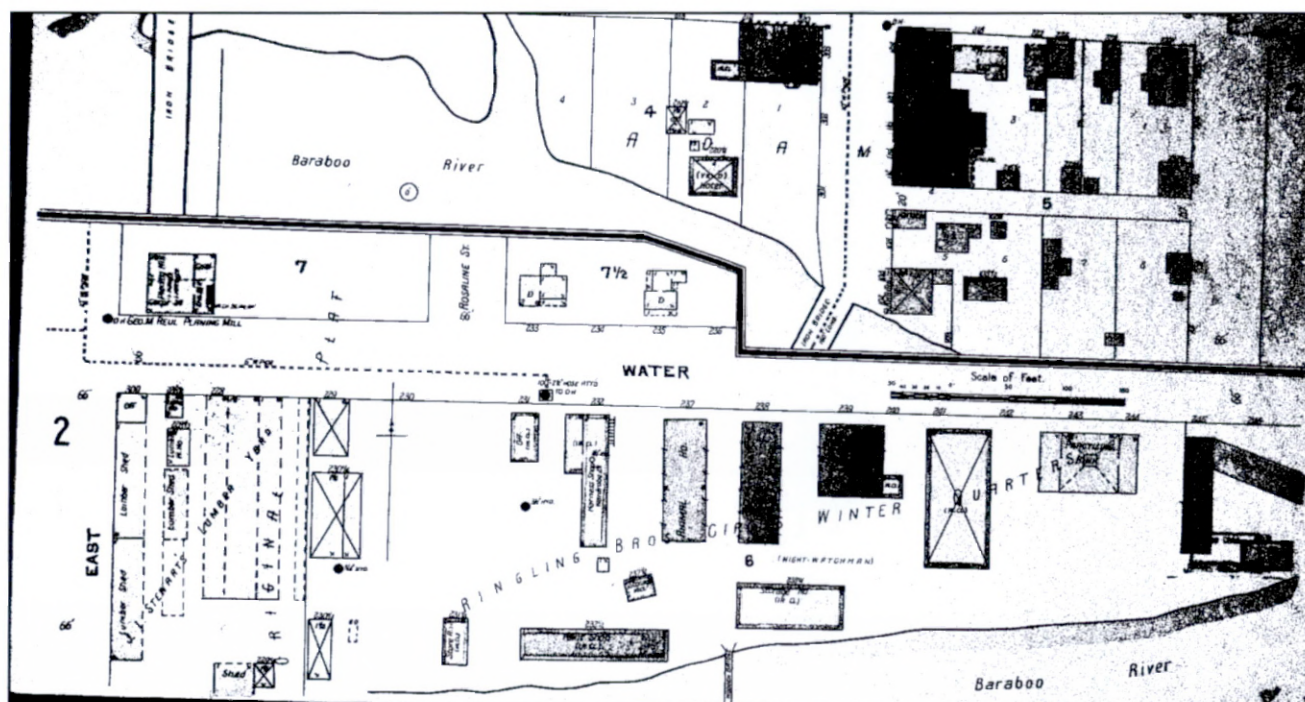
In 1911, *The Breeder's Gazette* described the activities of Ringling baggage horses at either the Bridgeport, Connecticut or Baraboo winter quarters in greater detail: "When the horses go into winter quarters at the end of the show season the shoes are all pulled off. Each pair of horses stands in a double stall with a 2" x 6" plank hung between them to prevent kicking. They are fed corn, preferably on the cob, twice a day, and all the timothy hay they will eat. Each horse is fed separately even in winter and the amount of corn given is regulated by the condition, the object being to put on flesh gradually during cold weather so as to have a reserve to go on during the next summer and to have all the horses as presentable as possible by spring. The horses are turned out during the middle of the winter days for exercise in a lot regulated according to the number of horses. One barn holds 236 horses, another 200;

The 1904 Sanborn fire insurance map of Ringlingville prior to construction of the Baggage Horse Barn.

others have less capacity. Each barnful is turned out into a lot just large enough to allow them to move around easily but not to run and fight. The result is that during the whole time they are out a constant milling motion of the herd is maintained. The active horses force the others to move about and all get exercise sufficient to keep them in good condition but not violent enough to afford risk."²²

Some baggage horses were required to work at winter quarters. Otto Kramer, a carpenter with Isenberg Bros., recalled that two and four-horse teams stabled on Water Street switched railroad cars at the repair shop.²³ The *Sauk County Democrat* reported that "It took twenty-six horses to dislodge one of the Ringling Bros.' wagons that had become stuck in the mud opposite their Winter Quarters last Monday."²⁴ Regardless of whether the baggage horses worked, winter certainly provided some relief from the demands of the circus season.

Every spring, in preparation for the upcoming season, the boss hostler and his crew would exercise the baggage stock. Horses would be reshod, harnessed in four, six or eight-horse teams to a loaded wagon, and then driven through the streets of town. The *Sauk County Democrat*



reported, "Ringlings have been bringing in spring by parading their fine teams about town in warming up exercises. They have splendid horses this year, as on other years."²⁵ A visitor to Ringlingville in the spring commented that "The horses are in the best condition and are groomed to perfection, and the stables are models of cleanliness."²⁶ By April or early May, the Ringlings Bros. Circus and its equipment, animals and personnel would depart Baraboo—only to return again in the fall.

Ringling Horse Barns

The Ringling brothers established their winter quarters on Water Street, just east of East Street, in 1886.²⁷ They leased the former Bassett Factory property from George Mertens and Jacob Van Orden and in November 1887, purchased it for \$1,500.²⁸ The land originally contained four buildings, two of which the Ringlings used as stables. The baggage and ring horses initially might have shared quarters with other animals as well as each other; however, the Ringlings soon began to build additional structures to accommodate the growing number of animals with their show. By the winter of 1888, they had completed construction on a Ring Barn, composed of a practicing rink and horse shed, and a Wild Animal House.

By the time the circus returned to Baraboo following the 1889 season, a new barn stood on Water Street.²⁹ Between 1885 and 1892, the Ringlings put an addition on the Bassett Factory and by 1891 began leasing additional land on Water Street.³⁰ In 1894, the Ringling Bros. Circus reported that its winter quarters contained seven large barns capable of housing 350 horses.³¹ Since Ringlingville had five stables at most, the show must have either rented or owned several barns elsewhere in town.

The Ringlings sought to increase their land holdings in Baraboo in the fall of 1897. In September, the Village of Baraboo sold them a parcel of land, 107 feet wide, east of and adjoining their property on Water Street for \$50.³² A

month before, the Ringlings had acquired the 2.4 acres east of the Village of Baraboo's holdings, which they had been leasing.³³ The *Sauk County Democrat* reported on September 16 that "Additional grounds have been purchased, which will give Ringlingville a frontage of about fifty rods. Three new and substantial brick buildings will be erected at once. Contractor C. Isenberg having secured the job."³⁴

Surprisingly, as early as April 1898, three additional structures—the office, a storage house and the second Ring Barn—were also present on the new lands, indicating that the Ringlings constructed these buildings prior to buying the properties. Elsewhere in Baraboo, the Ringlings paid \$2,425 for ten acres of land and buildings, including one large barn on Lynn Avenue in November 1897.³⁵ The following fall, the Ringlings again expanded eastward on Water Street and purchased a parcel of land from James and Elizabeth Curry for \$275.³⁶

In 1901, the Ringlings broke ground on the extant Ring Barn—56 feet by 120 feet—on Water Street. Carl Isenberg probably constructed the Ring Barn as he served as the Ringlings' primary building contractor. The cost of building the barn may have been as high as \$7,000, although this figure probably includes the cost of constructing other buildings, such as the third Wild Animal House.³⁷ In 1903, the Ringlings added a barn to their Lynn Avenue property. According to the *Sauk County Democrat*, "The new

Ring Horse Barn as the W. M. Holsafle Delivery Feed and Sales stable. Circa 1920.

horse barn which Ringling Bros. are erecting on their farm, known as the Case farm, will be an immense structure, the dimensions being 70 x 160 feet.³⁸ The Ringlings needed the additional space as they now reportedly owned over 600 horses.³⁹ In late 1904, the show hired Carl Isenberg to build the existing Baggage Horse Barn on Water Street, which replaced two smaller stables. The building could accommodate 100 horses, and like the new Ring Barn, measured 56 feet by 120 feet.⁴⁰ In 1907, the *Baraboo News* reported that the Ringlings were making plans to build yet another barn on Water Street, capable of housing 150 horses.⁴¹

In 1910, the Ringlings constructed a stable on Lynn Avenue for \$2,000 using salvaged lumber: "The old car shops of the Ringling Brothers near the roundhouse are about to be torn down and the materials taken to the Ringling farm where another large barn will be erected."⁴² The barn could house seventy-five horses.⁴³ Around 1915, photographs indicate that a fourth large barn also stood on the property, as well as a small wooden structure near the farm house.

After the Ringlings moved their winter quarters to Bridgeport in 1918, they retained ownership of the Water Street property, leasing it out to area businesses. For example, a circa 1920 photograph shows the W. M. Holsafle Delivery Feed and Sales Stable operating out of the Ring Barn. In 1932, the three owners of the Ringling Bros. properties in Baraboo—John Ringling, Edith Conway Ringling and Richard Theodore Ringling—sold the lands to Adolph Andro and Ferdinand J.

Effinger, Jr.⁴⁴ *White Tops* reported on the sale: "A few years ago the entire quarters at Baraboo with all that was within, old costumes, old lithographs, route books, photos, properties, wagons, and the like were sold by the Ringlings to A. Andro at Baraboo."⁴⁵ By 1936, a photograph of Water Street indicates that Schwartz Farm Equip-



ment Co. occupied the Baggage Horse Barn, although Robert and Lester Schwartz did not purchase the property until February 1939.⁴⁶ Following their deaths, the building came under the ownership of the J-W Realty Company, owned by William B. Kieffer, Sr. The Kieffer family sold the Baggage Horse Barn to Circus World Museum in 1996. As for the Ring Barn, a 1936 photograph depicts Louis Liss' Used Auto Parts operating out of the building, which Louis Liss purchased in May 1941.⁴⁷ The Ring Barn was the first historic structure acquired by Circus World Museum, which opened in 1959.

Ring Barn and Baggage Horse Barn

The Ring and Baggage Horse Barns do not appear to be of any particular ethnic style and differ little in configuration from other agricultural buildings in the Baraboo area. Both buildings share many architectural features. They have two stories, measure 56 feet by 120 feet and have front-gabled roofs. A series of small, single or double pane windows extend along the side walls of both structures. Rectangular cupolas situated along the peak of the barn roofs serve as ventilators allowing the hot, humid air inside the barns to escape. The roof extension on the front of each barn originally supported a hayfork track, which enabled hay to be placed in the second-story mow through the door directly under the extension. Originally, both buildings had two large doors or sets of doors that opened onto a wooden plank walk running parallel to the street.

Prior to Ringling ownership, the Adam Forepaugh and Barnum & Bailey circuses both incurred losses as a result of fires at their winter quarters. Possibly learning from their competitors' mistakes, the Ringlings chose to construct several mid-size horse barns rather than massive structures. This minimized the potential loss caused by fire in a single structure. The Ringlings also used construction materials that would reduce the risk of fire. The Ring and Baggage Horse Barns had wooden

frames covered with metal siding and metal-seamed sheeting on their roofs. The Ringlings' animal houses were even more fire-resistant with their brick construction, which also provided the exotic animals with greater insulation from the cold. Although early exterior photographs of the Ring and Baggage Horse Barns show stove pipes emerging from their roofs, heat emanated from the horses' bodies may have provided adequate warmth in both buildings.

As for the interior of the horse barns, no photographic evidence has been uncovered that documents the Ringling Bros.' occupation. In the case of the Baggage Horse Barn, its original appearance is not too difficult to discern as few alterations have been made to the barn since its construction in 1904. The Baggage Horse Barn consisted of rows of horse stalls situated in the center of the barn and along its side walls. A photograph indicates that at least some of the stalls were still intact in the late 1930s, possibly the same ones that remain today. In 1949, a visitor to the barn commented, "The next building I came to was the old horse barn. It was almost full of old tires, but you could see the stall posts but the tires covered the partitions if they were still in place."⁴⁸ While many of the partitions are indeed gone, stains along the walls show

Two horse stables along the western edge of the Ringlingville property, 1893-1904, which were razed to build the Baggage Horse Barn. The large building in background is from the adjacent J. L. Stewart's lumber yard.



where they were once located. The original, wood-plank floor is intact, sagging from the tremendous weight of its former occupants.

Due to numerous post-Ringling alterations, less is known about the appearance of the Ring Barn. It is thought that the Ring Barn was divided into two main sections. The front three-quarters of the barn housed the show's horses and ponies and probably contained individual stalls. One stall remains that reportedly stabled the noted horse "Silver King." A recessed practicing ring was situated in the back of the barn, probably accessible by a ramp. The configuration of the roof supports suggest that the practicing ring was a later addition. It is likely that the ring was added after the second Ring Barn was torn down in 1912.⁴⁹ Large windows along the sides and rear of the barn provided increased lighting in the ring, as compared to the small, single pane windows in the stall area. The front of the barn may have had wood-plank flooring, whereas the ring probably contained a dirt floor. Based on a photograph taken in the late 1930s, the second story or attic extended the entire length of the building, including the ring portion; at that time, the mechanic remained intact in the center of the ring.

Of the seventeen or more Ringling Bros. Circus horse barns that once stood in Baraboo, only three remain today—a stable on Lynn Avenue and the Baggage Horse Barn and Ring Barn on Water Street.

Notes

1. Ringling Bros. Circus, *The Route Book of Ringling Bros. Shows, 1882 to 1914* np, [1914?], pp. 34, 44, 54, 59 and 72.

2. "Description of Goods, Ringling Bros. Circus, 1902," Ringling Bros. Collection, Robert L. Parkinson Library and Research Center, Circus World Museum, Baraboo, Wisconsin.

3. Ringling Bros. Circus, "Ringling Brothers' Illustrated Natural History," *The Circus Annual. A Route Book of the Ringling Brothers' World's Greatest Shows*, 1903, p. 36.

4. Charles Philip Fox, *Circus Baggage Stock. A Tribute to the Percheron Horse* (Boulder, Colorado: Pruett Publishing

Company, 1983), p. 4.

5. "Horses That Haul the Circus," *The Breeder's Gazette*, April 19, 1911.

6. *Sauk County Democrat*, December 18, 1902.

7. *Billboard*, February 9, 1901, p. 9.

8. Samuel McCracken, Barnum & Bailey, to William P. Hall, July 22, 1913, Box 1, Folder 9, William P. Hall Collection, Robert L. Parkinson Library and Research Center.

9. Otto Ringling to Hall, September 30, 1909, Box 1, Folder 9, Hall Collection.

10. Ringling Bros. Circus, Official Program Ringling Bros' World's Greatest Shows (Buffalo: The Courier Co. of Buffalo, New York 1906).

11. *Baraboo Republic*, April 8, 1891.

12. *Baraboo Weekly News*, February 8, 1912.

13. Ringling Bros. to Hall, November 9, 1907, Box 1, Folder 20, Hall Collection.

14. Otto Ringling to Hall, September 30, 1909, Box 1, Folder 9, Hall Collection.

15. *Baraboo Weekly News*, February 7, 1918.

16. *Baraboo Weekly News*, January 30, 1913.

17. *Baraboo Weekly News*, December 25, 1913.

18. "Ringling Bros. Circus Inventory," Ringlingville Historical Source Materials, Staff Subject Files, Robert L. Parkinson Library and Research Center.

19. W. W. Dunkle, "A Day at Baraboo," *Billboard* March 21, 1914, p. 37.

20. *The Wichita Daily*, May 7, 1893.

21. *Ibid.*

22. "Horses That Haul the Circus." The horse barns described in this article were probably those at the Ringling winter quarters in Bridgeport, Connecticut rather than Baraboo. The largest barn

documented in Baraboo could only stable 150 horses.

23. F. W. De Sautelle letter to C. P. Fox, November 7, 1964, Ringlingville Historical Source Materials, Staff Subject Files.

24. *Sauk County Democrat*, April 21, 1904.

25. *Sauk County Democrat*, April 5, 1916.

26. *Baraboo Republic*, April 13, 1893.

27. According to a Sanborn fire insurance map from October 1885, the Bassett Factory was vacant ("Old Fac, VAC."). *Sauk County Democrat*, November 24, 1886 reported that the Ringlings were wintering on "River Street" at the "Bassett Factory."

28. Book of Deeds 56, p. 561.

29. *Sauk County Democrat*, October 3, 1889.

30. See 1892 and 1898 Sanborn maps regarding addition on Bassett Factory. Book of Deeds 62, p. 498 records W. H. and Mary Jacobs' sale of the property to Flora B. Piece, "subject to lease to Ringling Bros."

31. Ringling Bros. Circus, "With the Circus in Winter," Ringling Bros. Route Book, 1894.

32. Book of Deeds 72, p. 275 records the sale of the Village of Baraboo's land to the Ringling Bros. on September 11, 1897.

33. Book of Deeds 72, p. 276 records the sale of land, described in Book of Deeds 62, p. 498, for \$800 from J. B. and Alice Wise to the Ringling Bros. on August 15, 1897.

34. *Sauk County Democrat*, September 16, 1897. Only two of the new buildings had brick construction, the Elephant House and the Wild Animal House. According to the 1898 Sanborn map, the Camel House had a metal-clad, wood

frame. Ringlingville did not contain another brick building until 1901 with the addition of another Wild Animal House.

35. The Ringling Brothers purchased the property from Harrison and Laura Case in a foreclosure sale for \$2,425. Book of Deeds 69, p. 527. *Baraboo Republic*, November 17, 1897 reported that the property consisted of ten acres of land and a barn, and cost \$3,500.

36. On October 24, 1898, James and Elizabeth Curry sold the Ringling brothers the eastern portion of Ringlingville for \$275. Book of Deeds 73, p. 627.

37. *Sauk County Democrat*, November 7, 1901. According to *Ibid.*, January 9, 1902, the Ringling spent \$7,000 in 1901 on the construction of new barns. Both the Ring Barn and a third Wild Animal House were built in 1901.

38. *Sauk County Democrat*, October 29, 1903.

39. Ringling Bros., "Ringling Brothers' Illustrated," p. 36.

40. *Sauk County Democrat*, September 1, 1904.

41. *Baraboo News*, November 20, 1907.

42. *Sauk County Democrat*, October 13, 1910 and February 2, 1911.

43. *Sauk County Democrat*, October 13, 1910.

44. Book of Deeds 167, p. 4042.

45. *White Tops* July-August 1933, p. 24.

46. Book of Deeds 164, p. 364.

47. Book of Deeds 174, p. 299.

48. "A Letter from Fay F. Reed Tells of Historic Spots in Baraboo," *Hobby-Bandwagon* July 1949, p. 7.

49. *Baraboo Republic*, April 18, 1912, reports that the Ringlings hired Carl Isenberg to tear down their Ring Barn.

BILL KASISKA'S LETTERHEADS

GAAS. BARTINE'S NEW SHOWS
AND TRAINED ANIMAL EXHIBITION



PERMANENT ADDRESS
CONNERVILLE, IND.

NONE BUT THE BEST PERFORMERS
AND MUSICIANS EMPLOYED

THE BEST,
NEATEST

— AND —

MOST
UP-TO-DATE
SHOW

— ON —

THE ROAD

St Marys O 4/23 1909

Charles Bartine's New Shows and Trained Animal Exhibition used this letterhead in 1909, the last year it was on the road. The title and animals are printed in red, the photo and printing are in black.

THE GENERAL MOTORS PARADE OF PROGRESS

by Fred Fairbrother and Bill Rhodes

General Motors interest in using the circus as a means of advertising its products has a long history. Chevrolet and Pontiac automobiles were displayed in the menageries of some of the American Circus Corporation shows along with cut-aways of engines and other details. Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus had a GM Frigidaire refrigerator displayed on the wagon with the polar bear cage. This unit appeared in its big 1934 street parade.

When Chevrolet introduced the "Knee Action" front suspension the H-W performance featured an act where a man was run over by one of the new Chevys and was unharmed. Hagenbeck-Wallace also had a fleet of five Chevrolet conversion trucks in 1938. These were prominently lettered with the Chevrolet logo along with the circus title. They were the principal means for towing wagons from the train to the show grounds, replacing the old Knox and Pierce Arrow trucks for which parts were no longer available. More recently Al G. Kelly and Miller Bros. Circus paraded their elephants downtown in each city to a Chevrolet dealer. The Chevrolet emblem was displayed on their blankets. This arrangement was with individual dealers rather than the manufacturer.

In addition to these paid promotions GM produced a complete tent show of their own on two occasions.



Information booth on the 1936 mid-way, Fred Fairbrother on right.

The first began its tour in the spring of 1936 using a conventional circus type tent. It was transported on a fleet of trucks. Some had custom "streamline" bodies intended to suggest the GMC trucks of the future. The second tour went out in 1954 and appeared in a unique tent having no poles to support it. The 1954 show also included a new truck fleet that featured futuristic models. The two shows were called the General Motors Parade of Progress.

The 1936 edition was organized in Detroit. Moving South in a close caravan on January 29, it was given a proper farewell by none other than GM President Alfred P. Slone and

The 1936 Parade of Progress midway and big top with exhibit trucks on left.

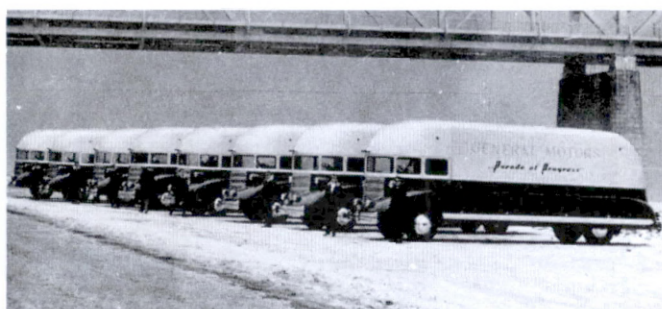
research Vice President Charles Kettering. No performances were given in Detroit or in any city enroute to Florida. The plan was to get maximum publicity by having the caravan move South to visit GM assembly plants and some of the larger dealers along the way. The fleet of unusual trucks was displayed at each site for view by employees and the public, and of course the press. In Florida the trucks and midway were set up for the first time and the full performance was rehearsed.

GM wanted attention even when the show passed on the highway so all movement was handled as a military convoy. A Cadillac command car was in the lead and communicated with some of the trucks in the pack by short wave radio. An assortment of automobile models from all the GM divisions were included in the convoy. Drivers always wore uniforms on the road and while visiting GM plants or performing. White coveralls were provided for work days when the exhibit was being erected. Travel was slow, partly because GM wanted everyone the convoy passed to get a good look and partly because the streamlined trucks were seriously under powered by today's standards. GM's small truck engines were based on the flat head Oldsmobile block and offered displacements of only 230 to 257





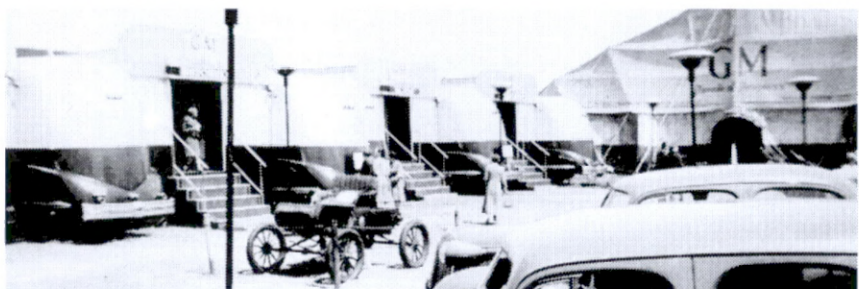
The uniformed drivers in front of one of the 1936 streamliners.



The eight streamliners in snow in Louisville, Kentucky, enroute south.



The big top going up in Lakeland, Florida in 1936.



A row of exhibit trucks with a 1903 Oldsmobile.

cubic inches. The trucks had a four speed transmission with a very low first gear called the "creeper" by the drivers. This was needed on many hills. The vacuum power brakes were

The opening stand in St. Petersburg. The Royal American Shows train is parked nearby.

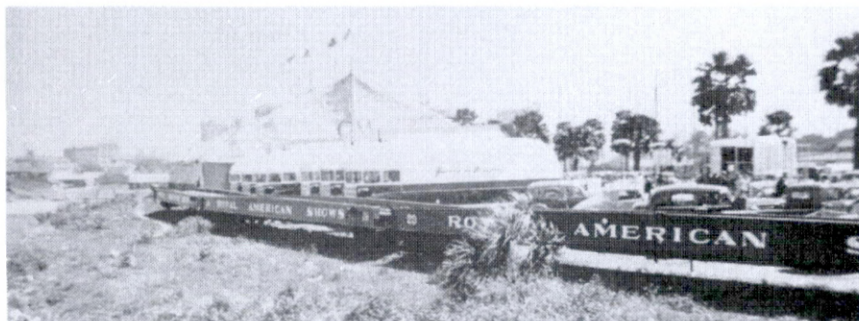
not as effective as might have been desired so down shifting was the rule on most hills. In addition to the eight streamliners, the fleet included conventional General Motors trucks and semis which carried the big top, chairs, an electric generator and mechanical supplies. Moves were always made in daylight for publicity. The personnel were boarded in hotels and ate in restaurants. Life was easier than on most traveling

shows. The drivers were paid \$100 a month. Uniforms, coveralls, room and board were provided. The food allowance was \$18.50 a week, which in 1936 allowed them to dine well. Like a traditional circus, the Parade of Progress used an advance agent who traveled ahead booking lots, parking space and hotels.

The show was set up in Lakeland, Florida for the first time, but no performances were given. The canvas boss and assistant were permanent staff. The workingmen were recruited in each city. They set up the tents and seats while the drivers erected the exhibits.

The show did not play one-day stands so ample time was available for inexperienced workers to erect the tents. The big top was a four pole bale ring square end with the stage in the middle of one long side. Seats

Mockup of a Douglas DC-3 cockpit was one of the displays in 1936.





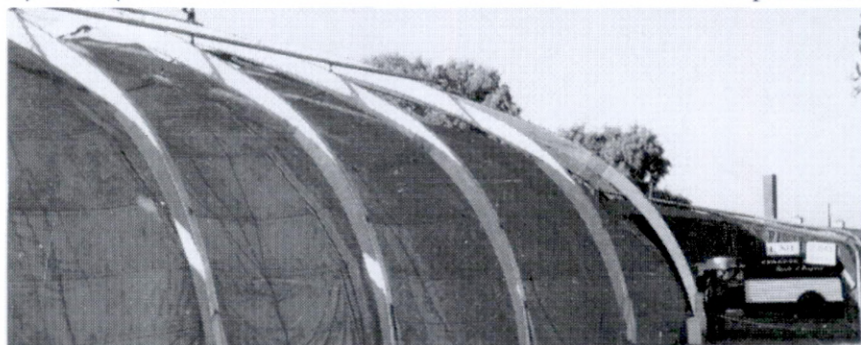
The 1954 aluminum frame, poleless big top with conventional semi-trailer.

were opposite the stage and in both ends.

One of the streamliners unfolded to form the stage. Another was behind the center section of seats and contained an enclosed motion picture projection booth for films which were part of the program. The performance consisted of juggling, magic and scientific demonstrations tied in with the product displays. This may be the first time a microwave stove was demonstrated. Ernie Foss was the master of ceremonies and cooked an egg on a handkerchief with no protection from the radiation. Movies concluded the performance. There were no animals or band. Recorded music was played through the sound system. *Skaters Waltz* was preferred and was played to the point of monotony.

The truck fleet included eight streamliners. Three were used as a walk-through midway display. They split apart horizontally so that the upper halves joined to form the roof and the lower halves formed the floor. Side panels carried in the truck enclosed the space. The three trucks thus connected formed a contin-

Detail off the frame supported big top. No separate side wall was used.



uous hall filled with exhibits. Patrons entered the front truck and exited the rear truck, much like a grind show. The performances in the big top were less than a hour and free.

The show opened in St. Petersburg, Florida, followed by Tampa and three weeks in Miami. As spring weather warmed temperatures, the show worked its way up the east coast appearing in



Jacksonville, Macon, Georgia and Virginia Beach, Virginia. Later in the summer the show had a blowdown in Mansfield, Ohio. The tour was delayed while the canvas was repaired.

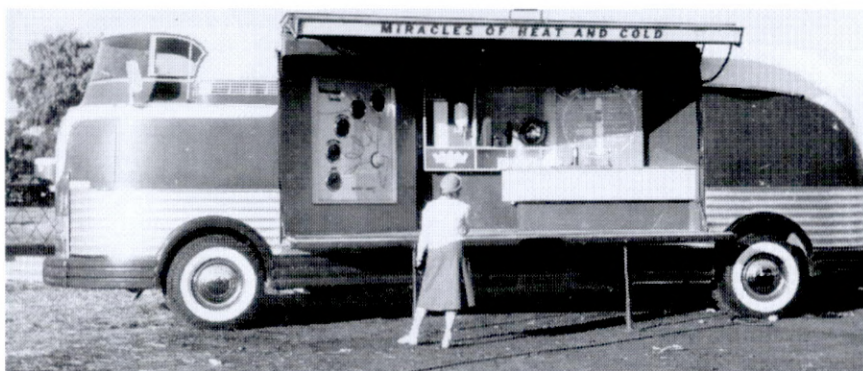
The complete route is unknown, but the tour continued playing eastern cities through the fall. At the end of the tour the equipment was stored and eventually sold. Several of the streamliners later turned up in other

service. The streamliner which formed the stage is pictured in the book *U.S. Military Wheeled Vehicles*. The author, F. W. Crismon, lists it in the five ton category. It was used as a stage for a USO Motor Camp performance in 1941.

In 1954 a new Parade of Progress was organized on the same lines as the 1936 edition, but with some changes. An entirely new fleet of GMC trucks was used consisting of current conventional models for heavy loads and a new concept in "streamliners" for exhibits. They were evidently influenced by popular military aircraft designs and featured "bubble glass cockpits" for the drivers in place of conventional two-man cabs. The big top was an innovative design using an exterior aluminum frame to support the canvas. No poles were used and the interior was unobstructed.

Trucks used to transport the tents and props beside the big top in 1954.

Prior to opening, it was decided to forego the big top in larger cities due to potential attendance. The more elaborate show was presented in buildings. The 1954 tour opened in Miami in a building formerly used to service big Pan American Airways Clipper seaplanes. This not only accommodated the larger weekend audiences, it also allowed a huge stage too big for the tent. On stage was the Motel of the Future and a driveway where the GM Car of the Future would roll up during the performance and discharge the "tourists of the future," wearing apparel of the future. The car in all details never reached the production line. The motel may have been copied somewhere, but its architecture was not widely adopted. The sports clothes



One of the 1954 streamliners unfolded to show a scientific display.

predicted for the future were right on the money. How their designers could have forecast the sports attire would become high fashion is a mystery, but at least they got that part right. One act featured a chorus line dressed for tennis.

Parts of the 1936 performance were updated and retained. Eggs were still cooked on a microwave stove, perhaps the same one, and magic still included color changes due to dye indicators and chemiluminescence. On some dates the indoor production was promoted as the General Motors Motorama rather than the Parade of Progress.

The new tent nicely accommodated the crowds in smaller cities, and there were no bad seats behind poles. But it was more of a problem to erect. The frame consisted of inverted U shaped aluminum channels which were transported in sections. The transverse ribs were bolted together on the ground. They were the raised one at a time and connect-

A lecturer in the "The World of Science" truck giving his pitch.



ed by sections of a straight "back bone" beam which ran the length of the tent. Pulleys were attached to the underside of the frame. The canvas was spread under the frame and attached to it by ropes passing through the pulleys. The tent was raised by tightening the ropes, thus



drawing the canvas against the underside of the frame. This required hours longer than the 1936 conventional tent with center poles. But it was futuristic and that, after all, was the theme of the show. There was plenty of time for set up as several days were allowed for each move.

The bubble cab trucks were all used for exhibits so the public would see them and be duly impressed by the advanced thinking at General Motors. Most were used for exhibits on the midway. Like some of the 1936 trucks the upper part of the side raised to form a canopy and the lower part dropped to form a deck with the display inside the truck. Periodically a lecturer would mount the deck and explain the display. This type of continuous display could reach far more patrons than the performances for seated audiences in the big top.

Not all of the 1954 ultra modern trucks have disappeared. One was recently seen at the Auburn Cord Dusenber Museum in Auburn, Indiana. It appears to be all original,

One of the 1954 trucks recently found at Auburn, Indiana. Photo by Leonard Krebs.

but has not been restored. It is not in protective storage. We think it should be restored and displayed since it may be the sole survivor of a very small group of unique trucks that were never in production and will never be duplicated. It may well be the last evidence of General Motors' once impressive Parade of Progress.

The authors: Fred W. Fairbrother was a truck driver for the 1936 show. The photographs for that year are by him or are GM photos from his collection. Bill Rhodes is a member of the American Truck Historical Society and the Circus Historical Society. The 1954 photos were taken by him unless otherwise credited.

THE 1998 CHS CONVENTION

A rainy and dreary Saturday afternoon in Atlanta saw the arrival of the Circus Historical Society convention delegates on March 7. Only a few determined souls managed to locate the registration room for early sign-up but somehow the turnout was considerable at the great Night-Before Party given us by the local CFA group, the Duggan Bros.-Arnold Maley Tent No. 116.

Getting lots of attention from our group were troupers such as Bill "Buckles" Woodcock, Jr., the Ray sisters, Barbara and Hope, and John Lewis, former Hoxie Bros. manager. All were pleased to meet Floyd King's daughter Linda King Pritchett, attending her first meeting.

The officers and trustees adjourned to the chambers of our president at 9:30 Sunday morning for their annual meeting, which will be covered elsewhere.

Our overcast Sunday afternoon was considerably brightened with a trip to the beautiful Big Apple Circus. Thunder came in peals and claps and shortly after we were admitted to the tent a brisk downpour was heard on the vinyl above. During the night before parts of the lot were flooded and we later learned that much of Bill Woodcock's equipment required moving to higher ground and the elephants had to be quartered in their truck.

The entire performance was superb and featured such top-of-the-line pro-

Speakers (l. to r.) Chuck Meltzer, Dave Friedman and Frank Robie.



fessionals as Bill Woodcock, Katja Schumann and Bello Nock. Although this report is not intended as a review we will mention two particularly outstanding acts. Natalie Enterline presented what the program called "Hat and Cane," and which I heard referred to as the "baton number," but which defied classification by standard nomenclature. To jump to the bottom line, Natalie absolutely stopped the show. The dynamic Arturo Alegria later broke half the laws of physics in an incredible display of juggling that closed the show for the simple reason that no act in the business could follow him in the ring.

Sunday evening found us back at the hotel for our annual *Bandwagon* benefit auction. The auctioneer introduced himself as "Col. Lucky Reynolds" but all who were with it recognized him as "Georgia Slick," who had privileges on the fifty-two King show. Working crew was headed by Belle Isle Blackie and consisted of Karen Severson, Linda King Pritchett and a couple of nice young boys. The sale was spirited and netted over five big ones.

Some dandy items came out of the woodwork for this sale with many present contributing; we will specifically mention Cam Cridlebaugh, John Lentz, Jim Dunwoody, Fred Pfening, Jr. and III and Richard Reynolds as bringing choice material. Likewise we had many high-rolling buyers and thank John Polacsek, Rick Purdue, Donald Horowitz, Margaret Shannon, Tom

Dunwoody and Ray Gronso for notable purchases.

Early Monday we met for our first session of papers. The room was decorated with four brilliant side show banners depicting the Fat Girl, the

Half Boy, the Siamese Twins, and Torture King. These were the work of John Hartley, a new CHS member and a professional banner artist, and had the advantage of alerting others in the hotel that this was not where the Retired Librarians Poetry Circle was meeting.

The morning session was presided over by an old guy who vaguely resembled Cliff Arquette, but without the sophistication. Richard Flint, after a droll allusion to "El Nino Eddie," led off with an interesting slide-illustrated paper on Barnum's Palaces of Wonders and Curiosities, which is to say the strange people of the side show. Next came Fred Dahlinger, also with slides, who detailed the evolution of the automatic stake driver, which he considered, along with the canvas spool and the seat wagon as the critical mechanical innovations of sawdust shows.

Margaret Shannon then read her scholarly paper entitled, "Boasting Babes and Beasts: 'Facting' Fiction." Margaret is an accomplished historian and always a good sport when harassed by the less erudite among us. The chap in the back who yelled, "Somebody dial 911" was out of line in our opinion. A major disappointment came when Buckles Woodcock had to spend the day undoing the effects of Sunday's deluge and was unable to make it in for his scheduled presentation.

Fred Pfening III presided over the afternoon meeting. His first speaker, Cedric "Ric" Walker, turned out to be one of the high points of the convention. Walker is the founder of and brains behind the UniverSoul Big Top, the African-American circus that was also playing Atlanta. He opened with the admission that he still had a lot to learn about the business; which in itself set him off from other Young Barnums we have heard. Walker says the UniverSoul was begun with the idea that it would take five years to "make all the mistakes and learn how to avoid them." In response to a question about spending more of his budget on advertising, replied, "We have learned that you can't just buy your way to success; you have to work

hard for it." He took a CHS application with him and we look forward to his joining us.

Steve Gossard then gave an informed talk on the Bloomington, Illinois YMCA Circus, accompanying his remarks with a video showing many well-known performers in action at the show in years past. Fred Dahlinger returned with a fascinating paper on the Pawnee Bill Wild West parade, complete with slides of dazzling wagons as seen in days of old. Fred also brought out many facts about the show's importance that were new to much of his audience.

We reassembled at 6:30 in the evening for an hour of fellowship before the annual banquet. Circus priest Father Jerry Hogan then asked the blessings of our Creator and an excellent meal was served. President Reynolds introduced several distinguished guests including the Don Covingtons and the lovely Katja Schumann, at whose horsemanship we had all thrilled the day before.

Guest speaker was Paul Binder, founder and artistic director of the Big Apple Circus. We were entertained with a short history of the show and the philosophy that has made it a success. Binder then called for questions and comments from the audience.

Tuesday morning found us back in our meeting room as Fred Dahlinger took the podium and announced that Stuart Thayer, our first scheduled speaker, was suffering from a bronchial inflammation and was unable to join us. This was the first time in many years that we did not hear from Thayer and he was greatly missed. All were happy to see that Bob Brisendine was present but former CHS president Joe Bradbury was in his Florida winter quarters and unable to appear.

John Polacsek gave his engaging presentation in the novel form of supposed letters written from the 1871 Wooten & Haight railroad and steamboat show. Chuck Meltzer followed with an absorbing tale of the "Giant Rat" shows of yesteryear sprinkled liberally with Chuck's own experiences around the breed. Only

Ward Hall could have done justice to his subject of pit shows, their attractions and their operators. Ward has become the recognized authority at these gatherings on a breed of showmen who sometimes skirted the letter of the law, so his talk included many captivating characters of the canvas world.

John Polacsek presided over the final afternoon session led off with Dave Friedman. Dave is a great press agent, motion picture producer and student of hyperbole and at one point brought the house down with a demonstration of what can be done with the Mother Tongue if you just know your adjectives. His paper dealt with the fall when the Tom Mix show decided to winter in Anniston, Alabama, Dave's boyhood home. Dave's father, a long time newspaper man, had for years been bringing the likes of Frank Braden and "Dex" Fellows home for supper so it took little for the lad to decide he had to join out when the Mix show pulled out in the spring. Dave's tenure with Mix was short-lived but he did spend many years of his life on the road publicizing various shows.

Bill Slout, always the consummate professional, presented a paper on a show that most of us only knew by its title Dan Rice's Paris Pavilion Circus, the building of the equipment, the sale to Rice, the show's difficulties and eventual demise. Frank Robie followed with a well-researched presentation on Bird Millman. Frank took the unusual approach of not attempting a biography but rather of correcting the myriad errors that exist in the literature concerning this star of the tanbark.

Al Stencell closed the formal presentations with stories about an assortment of midway personalities entitled, "Grifters, Trailers, Butchers, and Peelers—the Showfolks the Fans Didn't Photograph." Al brought in tales of a number of off-the-wall



Speakers (l. to r.) Bill Slout, Cedric Walker and Dick Flint.

troupeurs he had known personally as well as numerous others whom he only knew by reputation or through his research.

An extra added attraction for a blowoff, Ward Hall gave a stirring introduction to Zamora A. K. A. Torture King, whom Ward described as a "Human Pincushion." Zamora then proceeded to swallow a sword and skewer through the muscle of his arm. His final display separated the men from the boys and consisted of swallowing a length of string and then piercing his stomach and drawing what was said to be the same string from his body. The curious went up for a close inspection while the squeamish found reasons to look elsewhere. Ken Harck took credit for bringing us this extraordinary performer.

The final activity of the convention was a trip to the UniverSoul Big Top. Although the thermometer had dipped into the twenties by this time, a warm reception awaited us at this quite excellent show. Ric Walker was a gracious host as well as a first class showman. The acts getting the most comment from our group included the Ayak brothers, who performed daring heel catches from a single trap; Nayakata, a remarkable contortionist who hails from France; and the great wire act, the Willy Family. Durning the intermission the show provided hot dogs and soft drinks to the CHS folk. All out and over, the group ran to their cars and thence to the warmth of the hotel. Hasty good-byes were exchanged as some were departing that night while others packed for early departures. Dave Price

Minutes Of Circus Historical Society, Inc. Trustee Meeting

Pursuant to timely notice, the annual business meeting of the Trustees of the Circus Historical Society, Inc. "CHS" was held during the Atlanta convention on Sunday, March 8, 1998 in the chambers of the president. A quorum comprised of seven of the nine trustees was present, to wit—Richard J. Reynolds III (President), Al Stencell (Vice President), Dave Price (Secretary-Treasurer), Fred Dahlinger, Fred D. Pfening, Jr., Fred D. Pfening III and John Polacsek. Election Commissioner Karen Severson also attended.

Chairing the meeting, the President first called on Dave Price to report on CHS finances. The Treasurer passed out copies of a current statement which indicated that as of that date the Society had received \$45,513.54 and expenses of \$30,797.89 during the current (1997-1998) year. The excess amount plus other investments totaled \$131,033.69. A \$100,000 certificate is yielding 6% interest.

The President next addressed the importance of increasing CHS membership. Following lengthy discussion it was resolved that the Pfenings would prepare a brochure with excerpts from the *Bandwagon* for circulation to potential members. Trustees and other volunteers will be used to assist in distributing the brochures along with membership applications. The subject of a CHS Internet web site as a membership recruiting tool was discussed. It was agreed that a web site would provide membership information and offer no research or answer questions about the circus or circus people. John Polacsek agreed to get information on web sites and report back.

A discussion then took place regarding how the organization could best take advantage of its new 501 (c) (3) tax status in soliciting contributions. Severson and Polacsek with their experience in conducting not for profit fund raising agreed to work with the President in organizing a program for the CHS to begin later in 1998.

Pfening, Jr. reported on publishing the *Bandwagon*. He also advised that an application for not for profit postal rates would be made soon.

The President addressed the subject of emeritus trustees. He pointed out that section 4.16 of the Code of Regulations gives the Board discretionary authority to so honor persons who have provided long and faithful service to the society and the purposes for which it was organized and whose advice and council are deemed valuable to the society. A discussion followed and resolutions were proposed and unanimously adopted honoring and appointing Joseph T. Bradbury, Orin Copple King and Stuart LeRoy Thayer as emeritus trustees and ex-officio members of the board. Appropriate mementos will be presented to each of them.

There being no further matters for discussion the meeting was adjourned.

Note: The Convention had a net gain of \$546.40, and an additional \$5,146.00 was raised by the auction.

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VOL. V, CHAPTER 4, PART 2

By Orin Copple King

1897

"Advertising car No. 2 of Ringling Bros. circus came in on the Santa Fe today, and a crew of men has been busy all day decorating the billboards," the Leavenworth *Standard* reported on April 27.

On hand to meet the advance car was John Volz. The following story made page one of the *Standard*: "John Volz is mourning the loss of \$5 and with it the prospect of a contract to supply beef to Ringling Bros.' circus. Chief Cranston of the police force is awaiting news from Chief Steel of Topeka that the latter has arrested one Sam Davis, advance agent for Ringling Bros.' Chief Cranston wants Mr. Davis to explain a little piece of business transacted by him this morning.

"Mr. Volz tells that Davis visited his packing house this morning and after a considerable amount of talk closed a contract with the firm to furnish a large amount of meat for the Ringling show. Davis said that advertising car No. 2 would arrive on the Santa Fe train and he was to meet it and needed \$5 until that time. Mr. Volz, being of an obliging disposition, cheerfully handed the man the amount asked for.

"After Davis had gone, Mr. Volz concluded to go to the train and make sure of his money. In company with Lou Henry, he went to the Santa Fe Depot. The train arrived and the advertising car with it, but no Davis was to be found. The superintendent of the car told Mr. Volz that he knew Davis and that he was an old showman but did not belong to his party nor to the show.

"The next step was to report to Chief Cranston, the latter telephoned to Topeka where

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Orin Copple King

Davis had gone and requested his arrest.

"Chief Cranston says he knows Davis to be an old showman and talked with him since he came here several days ago."

Davis did not tarry long in Topeka and left for an unknown destination before the police could make an arrest.

The first word of the Leavenworth exhibitions of May 11, 1897, was an advertisement in the *Standard* on April 24.

Most of the two-column ad was devoted to elephants. Top billing went to Keddah, "a Zoological Marvel without a parallel.

"THE WHITE ELEPHANT ABSOLUTELY THE ONLY GENUINE SPECIMAN EVER SEEN in EUROPE or AMERICA. THE DISTINCTIVE FEATURE IN A HERD OF 25 BIG AND LITTLE ELEPHANTS and A MARVEL AMONG 1000 ANIMAL WONDERS.

"Every morning at 10:00 o'clock THE GREATEST FREE STREET PARADE EVER SEEN PRESENTED IN 30 TREMENDOUS SECTIONS AND EVERY ONE A BIG, GLORIOUS PARADE. [A cut of kilted elephants dancing vigorously on their hind legs to the drumming of an elephant musician.]

The Ringling Bros. Circus No. 2 advance advertising car. Pfening Archives.

"RINGLING BRO'S NEW EUROPEAN NOVELTY ENGAGED AT THE HIGHEST SALARY EVER PAID ANY ATTRACTION.

"GREATEST ARENIC FEATURE EVER EXHIBITED IN AMERICA FAMOUS LOCKHART DANCING, MUSIC MAKING, PLAY ACTING ELEPHANT COMEDIANS CREATING A FURORE OF ENTHUSIASM WHEREVER WITNESSED AND POSITIVELY SEEN AT EVERY PERFORMANCE OF RINGLING BROS. SHOWS.

"TWICE THE LARGEST CIRCUS EVER ORGANIZED REQUIRING 3 RINGS AND 2 STAGES IN ALL 5 GREAT ARENAS BESIDES THE MAMMOTH AERIAL SPACES AND 1/4 MILE HIPPODROME TRACK. ALL UNDER THE LARGEST TENTS EVER CONSTRUCTED ABSOLUTELY WATER-PROOF JUST AS EXHIBITED FOR OVER 100 PERFORMANCES IN CHICAGO.

"ONE 50 CENT TICKET ADMITS TO ALL - CHILDREN UNDER 12 HALF-PRICE

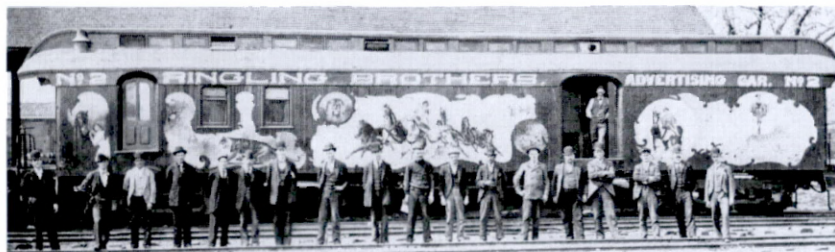
DOORS OPEN AT 1 and 7 P.M. EXHIBITIONS ONE HOUR LATER. WILL POSITIVELY EXHIBIT IN LEAVENWORTH MAY 11.

"Reserved seats and admissions show day without extra charge at Mehl & Schott's drug store, Fifth and Delaware Streets."

The Ringling press department was a highly skilled organization, probably the best in the country. Prior to show day, three handouts made the front page of the *Standard*. Two pertaining to

Keddah, the sacred white elephant, were used repeatedly in the Kansas tour. The most informative was, "KEDDAH, THE BEAUTIFUL.

"Keddah, the



only genuine royal white elephant ever seen in a Christian land, secured by the expenditure of a fortune, and only after several years of persistent endeavor on the part of a special commissioner, is the zoologic feature of surprising interest, which will be presented with Ringling Bros. World's Greatest Shows during the exhibitions to be given in Leavenworth on May 11.

"While the coming of Ringling Bros. magnificent exhibition is in itself an event of striking interest from the fact that it is vastly larger and superior to all similar exhibitions, popular expectation will be particularly excited by the opportunity offered to see not only the rarest of living creatures, but also one which no human eye has ever before looked upon outside the confines of Buddhist (sic) India. So far as known, there are only six, or perhaps eight, genuine white elephants in existence, and they are, with the exception of the beautiful Keddah, owned and maintained at royal expense by the potentates of India. Keddah was the favorite white elephant of the king of Siam, and his apartments in the royal palace at Bangkok were a dream of oriental luxury and opulence. Like the other white elephants, Keddah was believed to be the reincarnation of the soul of a departed Buddhist priest, and the reverence for him was so great that over a year lapsed before Ringling Bros. commissioner could even gain an entrance to his apartments in the palace in order to personally assure himself of the animal's genuineness.

"Keddah is kept apart from the other twenty-five elephants in the wonderful zoological display, and is accorded royal testament by his keepers—dusky Siamese who refused to be separated from their charge and accompanied him to America. Keddah is an unusually beautiful specimen of the white elephant. The *Scientific American* unhesitatingly declares that



Keedah, the sacred white elephant, in the 1897 Ringling route book. Pfening Archives.

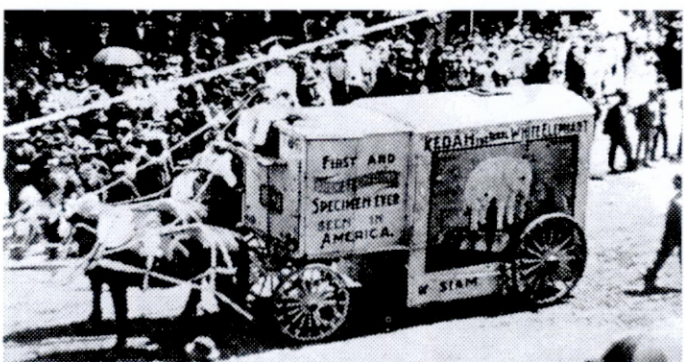
Keedah the only genuine white elephant ever brought to America, and no feature ever before exhibited in the country has ever attracted so much attention or caused such a degree of enthusiasm."

The parade of 30 sections was also the subject of a widely used handout: "A WONDERFUL DISPLAY.

"Ringling Bros. Gorgeous Free Street Parade.

"The Ringling Brothers big show for the season of 1897, which comes to Leavenworth on May 11, is in all probability the biggest thing of the kind that has ever traveled. The newspapers of Chicago, where the big show has given over 100 performances, and the papers of the other large cities, pronounce it the one big show of the universe. The Ringling Bros. have this year to make their visit to each community positively

Special wagon for Keddah in the 1897 Ringling parade. Pfening Archives.



irresistible to the thousands added a free, open air spectacular entertainment, which takes place as a grand processional street demonstration; and is a modern and gigantic successor of the conventional street parade still a feature with other shows. In discarding the old-time circus pageant and substituting this big new parade, the Ringling Brothers introduce something entirely new, novel and worthy of

public interest. It is presented in thirty enormous sections, or subdivisions, each one of which would easily outclass the usual circus parade, and combined presenting a sight, or rather a series of bewildering grand events, more than three times larger than the combined processional display of any other show in America.

"Among the thirty sections are representations of all the famed mounted military companies of the world, and elaborate and correct accouterments, arms and uniforms alone costing many thousands of dollars. There are scenes of warfare in the Punjaub (sic), huge elephants harnessed to cannons, mounted military escorts, native soldiers, guides, attendants, and commanders moving on to the encounter with warring tribes. The famous English Derby Day meet is represented in all the magnificence of the genuine event. Egyptian caravans in full equipment cross the desert with the wealth of oriental looms, spices and riches, with guides, merchants, guards, horsemen, and herds of burden-bearing camels. There are special children's parades that out-

rival in grandeur of equipment and gorgeous golden splendor the most impossible fairy tales. There are ten bands of music and over 400 horses; more than 100 cages, chariots and animal dens, and scores of wild beasts in dens open to public view, the entire representing a sight such as

has never before been seen here."

A handout written by a circus press agent also appeared on the *Standard's* front page, "THIS IS CIRCUS DAY."

"The circus is in town, and the small boy is more than delighted; and so are the older boys and the girls. Long before daybreak many were up to see the five sections of the circus train come in from Kansas City over the Santa Fe. Then the small boy and the rubberneck were up to the reservation to see the white city of canvas rise and to get an opportunity to see the show by carrying water for the elephants.

"At 10:30 o'clock in the morning, the first chariot at the head of the brilliant cavalcade drove down Fifth street with a band playing one of Sousa's inspiring marches. Then followed wagon after wagon glittering with their many hues of freshly painted surfaces. There were no signs of the wear of travel—every car, every uniform, every trapping of the horses fairly glittered with newness.

"Cage after cage of wild beasts were open to the gaze of the crowds that had infested the streets since an early hour. Five bands of music, chimes of bells and a steam calliope furnished music galore. There were groups of tableaux vivants illustrating numerous stories and a band of Palmer Cox's brownies.

"A new and decidedly pretty feature of the parade was the horse show procession. Handsome dog carts and traps with horses driven tandem and pick little 'tigers' up behind; victorias and drags with four-in-hands passed down the street with horses curvetting and trappings jingling as though they were making the round of the ring of Fairmount park or Madison Square Garden.

"Another novel feature, though not unusual to Leavenworth eyes, was the military section, with cavalry troop and cavalry band.

"Of course there were herds



The featured riders were pictured in this 1897 Ringling Bros. litho. Pfening Archives.

of the Orient. Of course there was a free performance at the grounds after the parade.

"It was by odds the best street pageant that has visited Leavenworth streets for many a day.

"The city began filling up with strangers at an early hour and by the time the parade reached Delaware street there was a perfect jam in the business district. The visitors came for miles from the surrounding country and towns and all the incoming trains this forenoon were crowded. Platte county alone sent in the neighborhood of 1,000 visitors to Leavenworth today. Leavenworth county farmers generally, and their families, are here.

"The big tents were pretty well packed at the performance this afternoon and the entire affair was appreciated. It was generally remarked on the streets after the parade that

A mounted band was a parade feature in 1897. Pfening Archives.

Ringling Bros. have the finest lot of horses and rolling stock seen in a circus parade here in years.

"The thousands who witnessed the magnificent parade of the big show in the forenoon had good reasons to anticipate the character of the circus performance given to the great amphitheatre on the show grounds on the government reservation. But the extent

of the program, and the bewildering maze of acts, were more than anyone expected to see. In fact, if any criticism can be made upon the show itself, it is that it is too immense for any one pair of eyes to see at one time. There are no less than twelve acts going on simultaneously and one's neck gets tired trying to see it all. The three rings, two stages, great hippodrome track and the extensive aerial maze are all interesting.

"The enumeration of all the performers is out of the question, but some of the principal ones must be noted for the reason that many of them are the best possible artists in their line of work. They present for the first time in America this season Senor Domingo, the foremost rider of Mexico; Cecil Lowande, the famous Parisian rider; Dan Leon, the great American rider, and the undisputed champion of the world William Demott. The equestriennes are Rose Dockrill, Elena Ryland, Lizzie Rooney, Julia Lowande, Minnie Johnson, Katie Demott and Allie Jackson, and there are no better in the profession. Miss Dockrill, in her Napoleonic act, jumps from the



ground to the back of her running horse, a feat that no other lady rider has yet accomplished. Her act throughout is one of the most dashing and unleashed ever seen.

"The work of the aerialists, of whom there are two wonderful teams, the Fishers and the Dacomas, is the most daring and intrepid ever attempted. Double and single backward and forward somersaults are thrown by women, entirely across the amphitheatre at a height of forty-five or fifty feet above the ground, to be caught in the hands of a suspended gymnast, just in the nick of time. Jennie Leon, a petite and pretty artiste, performs expert tricks upon the high wire and exhibits a beautiful flock of trained doves; Mlle. Irwin, in her flying leap across the tent in mid-air, suspended by her teeth and spinning at a high rate of speed, creates a sensation. Mr. Irwin's trapeze act, in which he balanced upon his head on the bar of a swinging trapeze, eats, drinks and smokes, is also an exceptionally clever performance.

"Spider (sic) Johnson's clown band is the most absurd musical feature ever seen and is excruciatingly funny. The hippodrome races are fully up to the excellent standard of merit of the other portions of the show and everything from beginning to end stamps the Ringling enterprise as among the brightest and best ever presented in this city."

May 11 was a gala day in Leavenworth. School was dismissed. The district court adjourned.

On the subject of legal matters, the May 11 issue of the *Standard* reported, "J. E. Jackson had an attachment run on Ringling Bros. show property to recover \$300 alleged due him for a breach of contract in 1896. A bond was given and the case will be heard in Justice FitzWilliam's court May 22."

The breach was unexplained, and the settlement was not reported.

The *Standard* also reported, "Ringling Bros. paid Major Edmonds \$100 in cash this morning for the privilege of having a parade through the streets. Heretofore the amount turned in to the city treasurer has been \$50 for circuses."

From Leavenworth, the show

Die Könige der Schausteller!

RINGLING BROS.

In Wichita am 23. September 1897.

Die Größte Schaustellung der Gegenwart!

Circus und Menagerie übertreffen
alle Schaustellungen der Jetztzeit
zusammengenommen!



Die größte Menagerie in der Welt!

Die Menagerie ist unvergleichlich! 25 große und kleine Elefanten!
Der einzige weiße Elefant, der jemals in Europa
oder Amerika gezeigt wurde. Von 1000
Elefanten, 1000 lebendwilde Zirkel!

This newspaper ad in German appeared in the *Wichita Herald* on September 2, 1897. Kansas State Historical Society.

moved to St. Joseph, Missouri, for exhibition on May 12, and then to Topeka.

Topeka got the news of the coming on April 12, in a paragraph in the *Topeka State-Journal*: "The First Circus.

"Ringling Bros. Show will exhibit in Topeka May 13. Ringling Bros. will be the first big circus to visit Topeka this season unless some other bobs in between that day and this. After Ringling Bros. finish their season in Chicago, which opened last week, they will start directly westward, giving performances through Illinois, Iowa, Kansas and then to the mountains."

The first handout in the *Journal*, April 20, made no mention of the Topeka date: "ELEPHANT FOUND

A WAY.

"Chicago, April 20—An elephant has solved a problem that was too deep for the minds of men accustomed to handling large animals. This intelligent beast is known as 'Baldy,' and belongs to the Ringling herd, of which Jewel, the elephant soon to take up her quarters at the New York Zoo, is a member.

"Baldy stands 20 feet 10 inches high, (?) is 8 feet broad and weighs 18,000 pounds. He is not as tall as Jumbo by two inches, but is thicker set and weighs more. He has always been accustomed to walking from town to town before he became the property of Ringling Bros. They prepared to haul him in a car, built especially large—14 feet from the ground to the top and 60 feet long. Baldy had as traveling mates four other elephants of ordinary size. These four got into the car by walking up a heavy gang plank. When Baldy tried this he couldn't get through the door. His head and shoulders stuck in the entrance each time. Efforts were made to induce him to stoop and to kneel, but Baldy would have none of it. Finally, his keepers stepped back to figure out some new plan, when Baldy took the matter in his own hands. He simply stepped off the gang plank, put his huge head under it and shoved it out of the way.

"Then, before the keepers could imagine what he was about to do, he walked to the car door, raised his fore feet in the air, planted them firmly within the car, and slowly climbed in.

"By removing the gang plank he had all the height from the ground to the door sill gained. He could then put his head in first, then his fore feet, and then clamber in at his ease, without bumping his gigantic head."

Another handout used extensively in Kansas appeared in the *Journal*, April 20. The story consisted entirely of puffery and added no detailed information about the show except that it is "now fully twice as large."

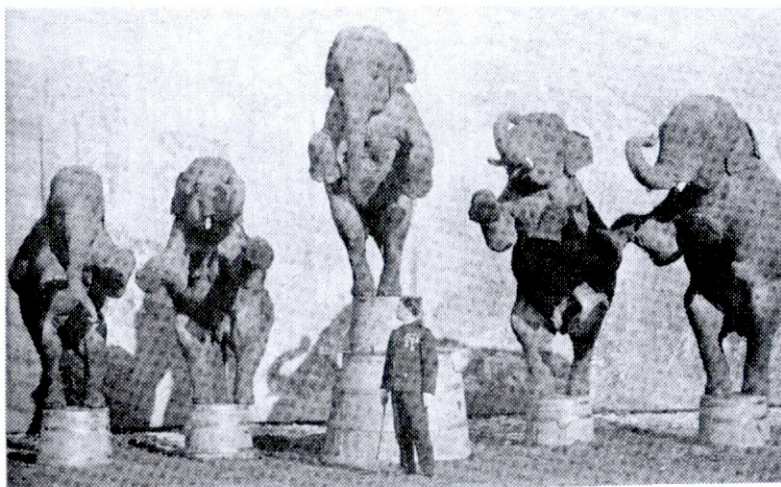
On April 24, the *Journal* carried the first appearance of the world's worst circus ad, consisting of heavy black statements surrounded by lines and lines of small type extolling the features of the great aggregation.

The feature act of the exhibition was Lockhart's comedy elephants,

which was described in another frequently used handout: "COMEDY ELEPHANTS."

"In adding the marvellous (sic) Lockhart comedy elephants to their already stupendous enterprise, Ringling Bros. have not only dumbfounded their would-be competitors, but they have offered to the American public a novelty that has created more genuine interest than any event in the

amusement world during the past half century. None of the familiar tricks and lumbering, ungainly acts performed by other elephants are included in their repertoire. They are literally animal actors. They present complete comedies, properly costumed and with appropriate scenic effects, and they perform their artistic work with a sense of its value and an appreciation of its humor such as no human comedian could surpass. In one of their ludicrously funny comedies, the clown elephant becomes intoxicated, and, reeling about apparently in the last stages of inebriation, is apprehended by an elephant policeman, armed with a great club, and marched away to the office of the nearest magistrate. This legal dignitary, ensconced in his high judicial chair, and gowned and bewigged as befits his high office, sits in judgment upon the offender, and having heard the evidence and wisely pondered upon the enormity of the offense declares in unmistakable pantomime that the culprit is guilty and is committed to jail. The policeman elephant immediately acts upon the orders of the court, seizes the commitment papers, catches the offender now fully sobered, by the ear, and hustles him off to jail. In his place of durance the unhappy culprit is visited by his bewailing and greatly scandalized family, who finally accomplish his rescue by over-



Lockhart elephants posed for this 1897 winter quarters photo. Pfening Archives.

turning the jail and forcibly setting the culprit at liberty. All the The actors in this laughable comedy are elephants. Not a word of command is spoken, and so well have the elephant comedians learned their difficult lesson that they never falter for a moment in their unspoken lines. The police court scene is, however, only one of several intensely amusing comedies performed by these elephant actors, and, in addition, they present a complete vaudeville programme, embracing jig dancing, waltzing, playing on musical instruments, intricate military evolutions and other feats that are creditable only to those who have actually seen

Printed by the Courier Company, this lithograph was used in 1897. Library of Congress collection.



these marvellous elephant comedians. Ringling Bros.' stupendous institution will exhibit in Topeka May 13, when Lockhart's famous comedy elephants and hundreds of other wonderful arenic, zoologic and hippodromic features will be presented here for the first time."

The *Journal* was liberal with its space

on show day: "THE FIRST CIRCUS DAY."

"Rain, as usual, accompanied the advent of Ringling Bros. circus; but it relented and fair skies greeted the parade at 10:30. The parade was beyond expectations, and in fact finer than any before seen in Topeka. The display of open dens of animals was the greatest ever attempted here and practically showed nearly half the entire menagerie to the crowds along the street.

"The circus tent is 225 feet long and seats nearly 12,000 people, and is the largest canvas ever constructed for circus use. There are three rings and two stages and something is going on throughout the long programme.

"It is out of the question to enumerate all of the interesting numbers.

"THE ELEPHANT HERD.

"Ringling Brothers have one of the largest elephant herds in the world.

Of course there was a large crowd of spectators out to see them. There are eighteen of the lazy beasts in the menagerie. The next largest elephant in the world, 'Queen Jumbo,' is one of the leaders in the herd. Just after the death of Jumbo this animal was the largest in the world, but later a larger one was captured.

"Trainer Dick Jones, who is known familiarly as 'Frenchie,' is one

of the most affable of the trainers. He has charge of the Ringling elephants. There are two distinct herds, that of Prof. Lockhart and of the Ringlings. Prof. Lockhart takes care of his own animals and Trainer Jones of the Ringling elephants. All of them are kept together in the menagerie tent where each has its foot chained to a stake. Trainer Jones is a young man with a pleasing manner. For six years he has had charge of these elephants and he declared that they are the most intelligent animals living with the possible exception of the horse.

"Everyone can't train elephants," said he to a *State Journal* reporter. "There are some of Lockhart's elephants that I don't dare go near. We have one very vicious one in the herd. It is Toddles. He will knock a person over with his trunk every chance he gets and tramp them. Queen Jumbo is a little cranky too. Old Baldie up there who leads with Queen Jumbo saved a little girl's life not long ago in Chicago. We were showing in Tattersal's and the little girl, Bessie Rooney, was learning to ride. She got near the trained bear and he grabbed her. Baldie made a plunge and knocked the bear over.

"Babylon is one of our larger elephants. She has been in this country about 30 years. Sometime ago her back teeth got out of order and they filled them with gold. It took half a pound, so you see she is a hightoned (sic) one.

"Fannie is that African elephant who always runs away when she gets a chance. They offer \$1,000 for anyone who can stay on Harry's back three minutes. He can beat any horse bucking you ever saw. Kedah (sic), the white elephant, is very nervous. See how he shakes his head all the time. There is a native of India who travels with the show who came over with Kedah. He thinks he couldn't live if it wasn't for Kedah."

"CIRCUS LEMONADE

"There is the usual quota of red lemonade stands and fakirs with the Ringlings. This morning they were busy getting their wares unpacked and their stands erected. The men with checked shirts and a dissipated countenance worked rapidly and earnestly. 'Honeycomb popcorn' done

up in colored tissue paper was dug out of the boxes in large quantities. The peanut tray was next and then the lemonade cans. One man poured water into a long can to rinse it, while another actually squeezed juice from some lemons. In a short time several gallons of lemonade with a beautiful red tint was being stirred and with a few other arrangements the stands were in shape to do business. There were other stands too. Many colored people, who have profited by past experiences, have set up refreshment stands and the circus grounds will ring with the cries of wares.

"The ice wagon was liberally patronized. When the iceman had delivered the article, the stand man said: 'You'll be back again this afternoon? I'll pay you then.'

"No, you pay me now," said the iceman.

"RAISING THE TENT.

"There are workmen and workmen, but it is doubtful if there is a circus which has employes whom they work as hard as the Ringlings.

The men seem to be well adapted for their particular line. Probably an immense tent was never raised

William Demott, champion bareback rider of the world. Pfening Archives.



any faster than the main one of the show today.

"The clouds were threatening to pour down volumes of water at any moment and the foremen urged their men to their utmost endeavors. The top canvas of the big tent lay on the ground with the four center poles standing up through it. A gang of 20 men started around the edge, placing the short poles ready for the lift. This done, a crowd of 60 workmen crawled in under the canvas and caught hold of a rope which raised the center at the tall poles. The whole thing looked like an immense dish with ice cream in it.

"Quickly the roof of the tent was put in position, the second and third tier poles were pulled into position by horses and the sides were fastened on, and there was the tent which will seat thousands of people. Near to the big tent was the costumer's quarters. In this place all the fancy uniforms and costumes were stored. Two men are carried along who do nothing but attend to packing and unpacking these costumes. It is a job which requires a system and the whole thing moved along just as if the show had been here a month."

"SHEEP ON THE CIRCUS GROUND.

"This morning while the circus tents were being put up and all was astir in the fair grounds, a stock car was pushed into the grounds from the Santa Fe switch spur and several hundred sheep unloaded in the open stretch of ground in the eastern part.

"The sheep scattered in confusion and the keepers who were trying to drive them to the sheds south of the race track were unable to control them. But there were several small boys near by and when they saw the predicament in which the drivers were, they sent up a loud cry and dozens of small boys, black and white, came running toward the sheep at full speed. They were watching the raising of the tents, but when that cry of alarm, which all small boys know, arose, they made straight for the scene of the fun. They surrounded the sheep and herded them toward the sheds. They weren't slow about it either. They drove them as fast as their legs

would carry them. The sight of several hundred sheep being driven pell mell through the grounds by nearly a hundred boys of all sizes, was one to distract attention from even a circus. The sheep were safely stowed in the sheds and the boys returned to watch the operations at the white city of tents."

Following circus day, the *Journal* reported, "No fakirs with the show." Not even a balloon man. The *Journal* also reported, all policemen attended the circus.

"In one car and an open trailer coming from the circus, the trolley conductor collected 108 fares.

"Several of the running horses fell in the races at the circus yesterday afternoon. The curve at the south end seemed to be very slippery. Two men were hurt but not seriously.

"One of the parade wagons with the Ringling shows broke down yesterday, and employees notified the Topeka railway officials that an electric car had collided with the vehicle. Upon investigation, it was found that the injury was done at St. Joseph in a collision.

"It was necessary to dismiss the scholars at Grant school yesterday at recess so they could see the parade, as in one room there were only two pupils out of 40 present, and another room boasted five."

The *Topeka Daily Capital* reported, "Altogether, a large part of the adult population of the town and nearly the entire juvenile contingent took in the show. The larger crowd attended in the afternoon, at which time, the large tent, which is advertised to hold 12,000 people contained almost its complement. At a low estimate, there were more than 9,000 people present.

"The evening performance was not so well patronized. The thermometer exhibited a downward tendency, and the prospect of sitting for three hours in a tent drove away many who would have otherwise made donations to Ringling Brothers' traveling expenses.

"Several features offered by Ringling Brothers had the merit of originality. They may have been exhibited by other circuses in other places, but they were new to the audiences that viewed them yesterday.

INGLING BROS.

THE BIG SHOW POSITIVELY WITHOUT A RIVAL IN THE WORLD

THIS YEAR DOUBLED IN SIZE

ONLY GREAT BIG SHOW ON EARTH

AND NOTED FEATURES

WILL EXHIBIT IN GREAT BEND, SATURDAY, MAY 15.

RESERVED SEATS AND ADMISSIONS SHOW DAY WITHOUT EXTRA CHARGE AT ALLEN DRUG CO'S STORE

This newspaper ad appeared in the *Barton Beacon* on April 28, 1897. Kansas State Historical Society.

"One of these was the presentation of a trained bear. A large specimen of the black variety gave an exhibition of fancy riding, inspiring the remark made by a woman in the audience, that 'this was the only "bear" back riding in the show.'

"About the best thing in the circus was the troupe (sic) of trained elephants. Trained elephants are usually attachments to circuses but the enormous animals that drew applause yesterday afternoon and evening, outclassed any of their brethren that have visited the city.

"Speaking of elephants, the white member of the family captured the attention of visitors to the menagerie. His keepers had to listen to some queer remarks.

"Noticing that the sacred animal of Siam kept its head continually nodding, a man standing near the ropes

inquired: 'What's he trying to do there?'

"Nodding," replied one of the keepers. 'He does it all the time.'

"I know it," was the reply. 'I've seen them in the windows of candy stores.'

"I don't believe it's alive at all," broke in a woman standing near.

"It's alive, all right," retorted a small boy. 'But, pshaw, it ain't white. They just washed it.'

"With the humor loving contingent of the audience, the clown band easily scored the hit. The leader was made up to represent Professor Sousa, and the imitation was complete—until you heard the band play. Of the music, the less, the better.

"It was not like other circuses. Everything just suited the people. The show got in town on time. It was shortly after 4 o'clock when the first of the five big trains arrived from St. Joe. The others pulled in soon afterwards and by 10 o'clock, the big tents was (sic) up in the fair grounds.

"One of the features of the circus day was the street parade. It was one of the best ever given in Topeka. It was larger than the ordinary and the horses added no little beauty to it. The performers by way of a change rode in traps and carriages instead of on horseback as in the ordinary parades. But the best of all was that it moved on time.

"I guess we brought the rain with us," said Al Ringling, one of the five of the Ringling Brothers, yesterday—an equestrian director of the show. 'We never strike this town except when it rains. I think we have only had one good day in Topeka without rain.

"We always like to make Topeka, too. This is a good circus town; I know that, for it has that reputation. When we were here before, the time we showed, we had the best crowd we had had that season. That is why we like to visit Topeka.

"This year, we have been pretty successful. Rain hasn't bothered us much and of course the rain is our big enemy. You can't make money in the circus business, when it is raining all the time. But then we can't regulate the weather."

Research funded in part by grants from Wolfe's Camera & Video Inc. Topeka, Kansas.

THE GREAT
COLE BROS'
UNITED
SHOWS

